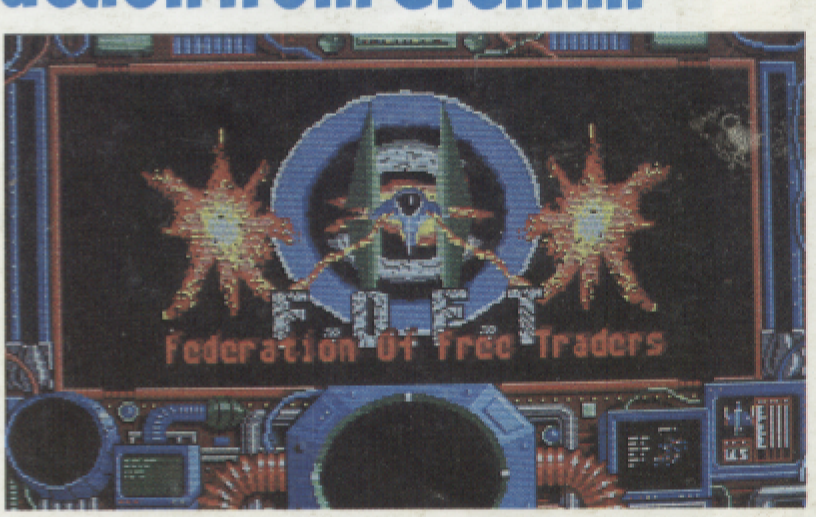


OCTOBER 1988
ISSUE ONE
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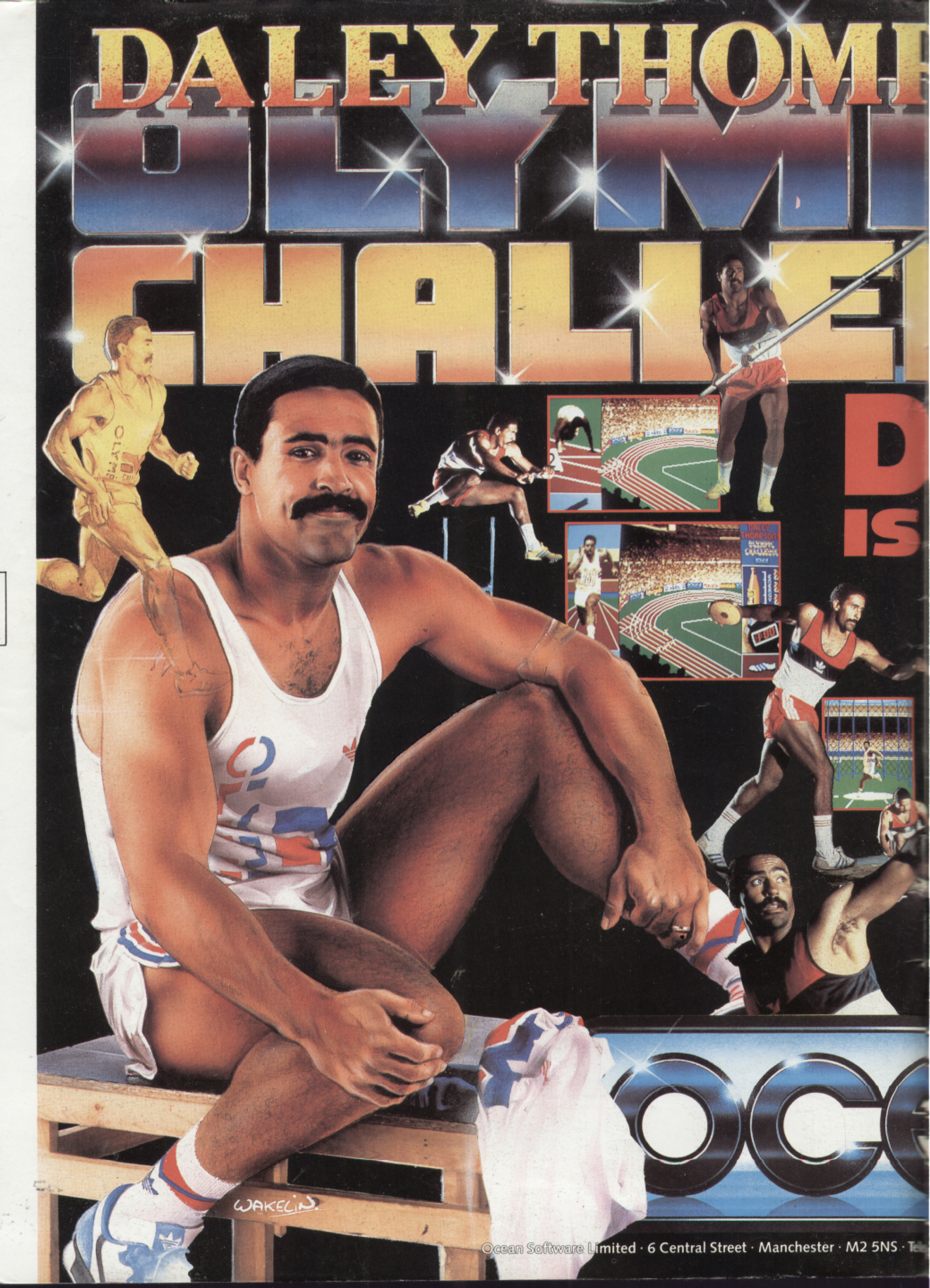
A — Slick shoot 'em up action with Electronic Arts' FUSION DREAM

ST — Tower toppling fun with Hewson's NEBULUS

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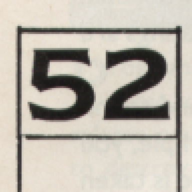


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You can cut the atmosphere with a blunt knife as you attempt to rescue hostages from the clutches of heartless terrorists. Infogrames bring all the nail-biting tension of a seige to the ST and Amiga.

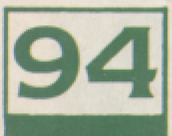
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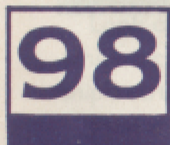
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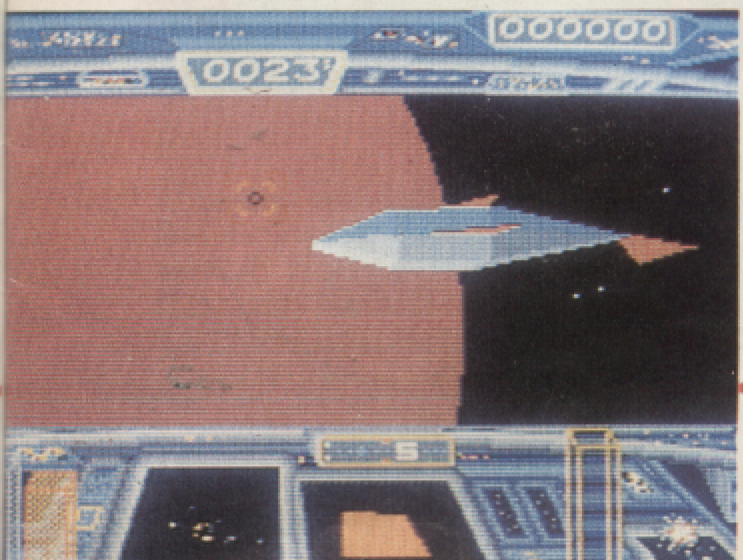


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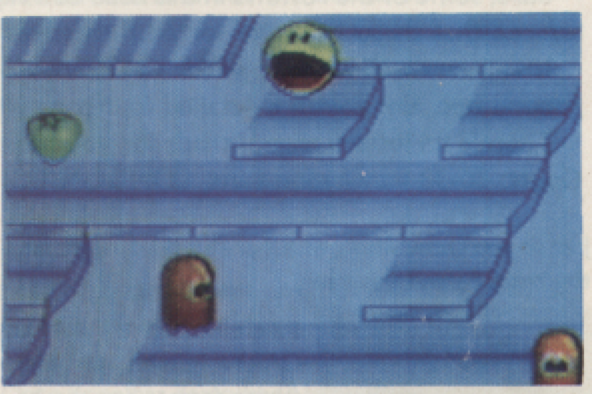
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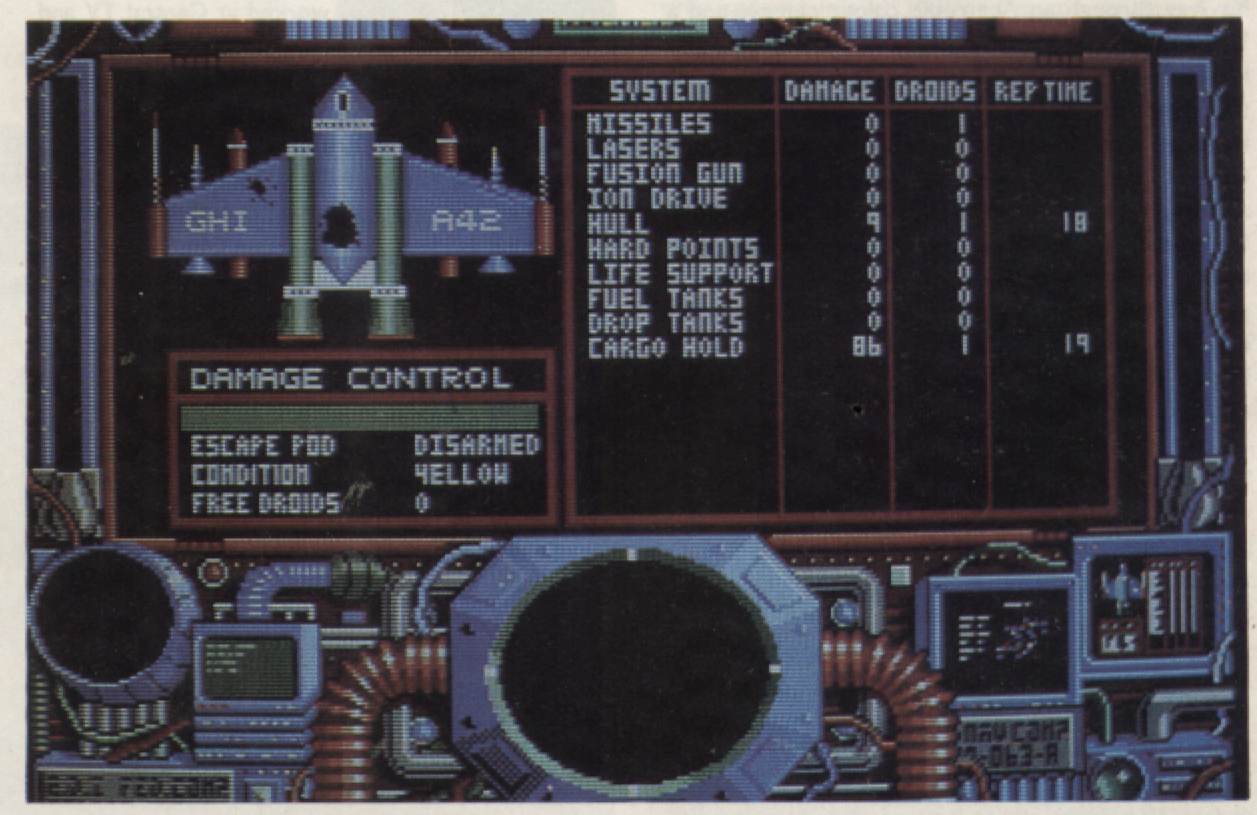
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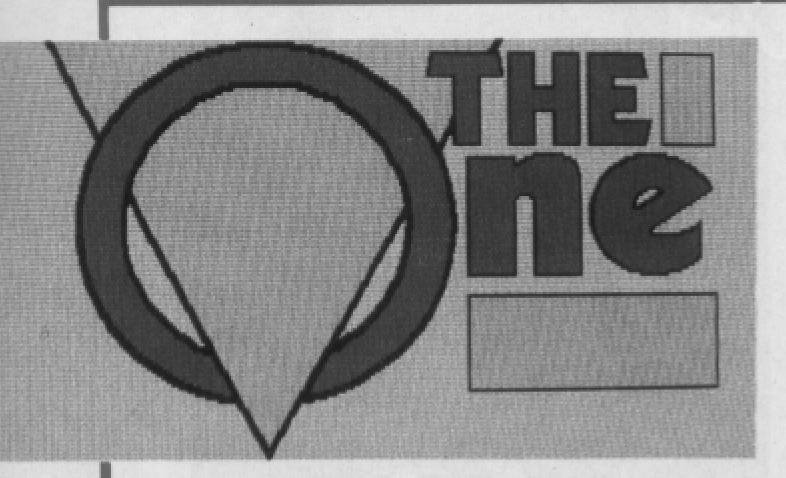
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18 FEDERATION OF FREE TRADERS



Never have games players had it so good. While game concepts will never actually improve, the means to express them has certainly come a long way since the unreliable tape-based days of the ZX81. Over the last eight years, home computers have slowly but surely got bigger and better, with more colours, more memory, better sound and faster processors, allowing ideas to be put into practice which were previously impossible to express. The established 8-bit machines seem to be on the way out, making way for the new breed of games machines – and new magazines...

The One is about 16-bit games and beyond. We aim to provide an authoritative monthly guide to 16-bit games, with as much information as possible presented in an easily digested form. The reviews will invariably occupy two or more pages, which gives us room to concentrate more on the visual side of things to convey the feel of a game better than reams of text ever could. The games then begin to speak for themselves, allowing us to explain more easily and effectively how they play by means of detailed captions or annotations. The main body of text describes briefly how the game in question works, while the ST, Amiga and PC comments and ratings are there to inform you of the games' good and bad points.

The GRAPHICS and SOUND ratings reflect more than just quality of aesthetics, taking into consideration how well, say, animation, music and sound effects are used. PLAYABILITY shows how accessible and enjoyable to play a game is, bearing in mind the type of game under scrutiny. For example, you could quite easily have a strategy game which is just as playable as a straightforward shoot 'em up. The potential lasting value of a piece of software is taken into consideration with VALUE, while OVERALL serves to provide an instant comparison rating. We take 50% as a strict average, with anything good around 60%, very good 70%, great 80% and brilliant 90% or so upwards. 100% is perfect, and we won't be dishing out too many of those...

Chats with the programmers will be included where possible, to familiarise you with the faces behind the games, along with some simple tips to get you started and any other snippets of relevant information.

Sure, some of the reviews in this issue don't quite fall into this ideal, but there are invariably teething problems with a launch of a new magazine, so rest assured that these will have sorted themselves out after a few issues.

It's all very well knowing which games are worthy of your attention, but what about help with playing them? Each month The One will feature plenty of general tips, along with a detailed four page players guide to a game which requires the attention.

There's no letters page – that's for you to provide. Let us know what you think of this first issue and help us to help you. Write to The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON EC1R 3AU. Alternatively, turn to page 44 and fill out the questionnaire.

Just so you know who's who, here's a brief insight into the team behind this issue...



GARY PENN, erstwhile (that's former for the benefit of any Roger Bennetts out there) Newsfield person, aged 22. Gary has been playing games since the late '70s, starting with a simplistic hand-held console of sorts. After working his way through an Acetronic colour console and a VIC 20, he moved on to the Commodore 64. In 1985 he joined ZZAP! 64, and over a year later he was in the editor's chair. In September of last year Gary launched The Games Machine with ex-Crash editor Graeme Kidd and acquired ST, Amiga and PC awareness in the process. Gary joined Commodore User as Deputy Editor in December of last year before taking the helm of The One in August of this year. David Braben's **Zarch**, Firebird's **The Sentinel**, Williams' **Star Gate**, and Nintendo's **Super Mario Bros** feature prominently in his all-time top ten favourite games.



STEVE JARRATT, another erstwhile Newsfield employee, aged 25. Armed with a degree in chemistry, Steve decided to pursue a career as an industrial chemist, but left it all behind in March of last year when he joined ZZAP! 64 as a staff writer. Earlier this year he found himself editing CRASH for a few months before leaving Newsfield behind him to join EMAP. Steve has owned an ST for around 18 months, and an Amiga for six. He currently enjoys Mastertronic's **Sidewinder** because it's so noisy, Firebird's **Bubble Bobble**, Domark's ST conversion of **Star Wars**, Elite's ST conversion of **Buggy Boy**, Firebird's **Virus**, Imagine's ST conversions of **Arkanoid** and **Revenge Of Doh**, and Firebird's **The Sentinel**. Strategy and adventure orientated software also appeal, but he feels that there's really nothing special around at the moment that falls into either category.



GRAEME KIDD, yet another erstwhile Newsfield chap, aged 30. Graeme worked at Central TV and (ahem) Galaxy Publications before joining CRASH, which he was soon editing and quickly took to the top, making it the best selling computer magazine in Britain – which it hasn't been since. Graeme launched The Games Machine with Gary Penn last year, then went on to successfully launch Dennis' Computer Shopper. With over three years game-playing experience under his belt (and it's quite a large belt), Graeme likes his software more pacey than racey.

JULIAN RIGNALL, (believe it or not) another erstwhile Newsfield fellow, aged 23. Julian's been playing games since he was a wee sprog. He won sister magazine Computer And Video Games' arcade championship and contributed to the now defunct Personal Computer Games before becoming very much an integral part of ZZAP! 64 in 1985 – which he later went on to edit. Jaz (as he prefers to be called) owns a Spectrum, a Colecovision, a Vectrex (remember those?), an Atari 2600 console and an Atari 800, a Nintendo console, and a Commodore 64. He's had ST for the past two years, and an Amiga for slightly less. Sadly, he's recently joined C&VG as its Deputy Editor.



GRAHAM TAYLOR, aged somewhere around the 30 mark. Near legendary, he now edits sister magazine Sinclair User, but enjoys playing games on his ST which is linked to a bunch of synthesizers.



GARY WHITTA, a new face, but far from inexperienced. A games player of the highest calibre, he got into the swing of things through a Binatone console, before upgrading to an Atari 2600 followed by a VIC 20 and a Spectrum. Gary moved on to a Commodore 64 in 1985, but had the good sense to buy an Amiga in 1987. In his short-lived past he's provided odds and sods for Popular Computing Weakly and reviews for Commodore User and Computer + Video Games, but now he sees The One as the best medium through which his opinions can be expressed. As far as quality games are concerned, Gary's into Acornsoft/Firebird's **Elite**, Firebird's **Thrust**, **The Sentinel**, EA's **F/A-18 Interceptor**, David Braben's **Zarch**, Firebird's **Bubble Bobble**, Epyx's **World Games**, and Taito's **Operation Wolf**. And for some bizarre reason he actually enjoys watching Micro Live.

OOPS!

It came to our attention just as the issue was going to print that the price quoted for Gremlin's Federation Of Free Traders (reviewed on pages 18, 19, 20 and 21) is in fact incorrect. It should be £29.99, not £24.99 as stated.

The disk affixed to the front of this issue contains two playable previews . . . a single level of Electronic Arts' Fusion (not Fusion Dream as stated on the cover and contents; apologies for the mix up . . .) for the Amiga, and a specially produced level of Hewson's Nebulus for the ST. Here's the low-down on how to load and play them . . .

FUSION



Programming team Bullfrog Productions is a new name to the games scene, and **Fusion** is their first release courtesy of Electronic Arts. The objective is to destroy an alien planet by collecting pieces of an ancient but powerful bomb which are scattered throughout 14 alien-infested levels. What you have here is one complete level to play, with five different types of alien intent on putting an end to your fun.

There are two craft to control. You start in the Assault Crawler, which is restricted to movement along the pathways. A Mother Ship is located nearby – press the space bar to board it. You can now fly above the scenery, shooting anything that moves while enjoying the nifty soundtrack and beefy spot effects. But you can't actually access any other levels, even though you can open exits to them.

In the finished product you move from level to level by activating switches which subtly affect bits of the backdrop, opening previously inaccessible areas and so on. But to get anywhere you have to activate the switches in the correct sequence – a simplistic strategic twist.

Look out for special hidden features, such as a skull which increases your firepower and re-energises your ship's structure. Have fun . . .

Fusion is set for an October release at a price of £24.95. An ST version doesn't seem likely.

LOADING

Couldn't be simpler. Switch on your machine and insert the disk at the Workbench prompt (any A1000 owners will need to use Kickstart first). After a short pause The One logo will be displayed. **Fusion** will now load automatically.

CONTROLS

A joystick in Port Two is used to control all movement and firing of both Mother Ship and Assault Crawler. Press SPACE BAR to board or leave the Mother Ship.

Platform pranks aplenty in Hewson's Nebulus. Jump the molecule-like alien and shoot the blocks so you can use the lift to get further up the tower. But watch out for the bouncing ball.

NEBULUS



Written by John Phillips, the man behind Hewson's high speed 3D shoot 'em up **Eliminator** (reviewed in this issue on page 86), **Nebulus** is a brilliantly innovative variation on the platform theme. Taking control of a cute green creature called Pogo, the objective is to demolish a series of towers. A tower is brought down to earth by guiding Pogo to the top within the given time limit, negotiating a devious arrangement of platforms while avoiding a host of bizarre aliens, such as bouncing balls and bubbles. Beware of disappearing platforms, and be careful not to fall into the water as Pogo can't swim. Once Pogo has demolished a tower, he slips back into his craft and travels to the next, more difficult tower – after taking part in an underwater bonus section (which isn't present in this demo).

The finished product is likely to contain over 16 towers (although John reckons he could, if he had the time, squeeze in over 100), and you do get three lives to play with instead of only one as in the demo. And if you were wondering where the sound is . . . it's not included yet. But rest assured that final version will definitely feature a title tune and some suitable effects and jingles.

Nebulus is due for an October release on the ST at a price of £19.99. Amiga version should follow shortly thereafter.

LOADING

Switch on your machine and insert the disk. After a short pause The One logo will be displayed. **Nebulus** will then load automatically.

CONTROLS

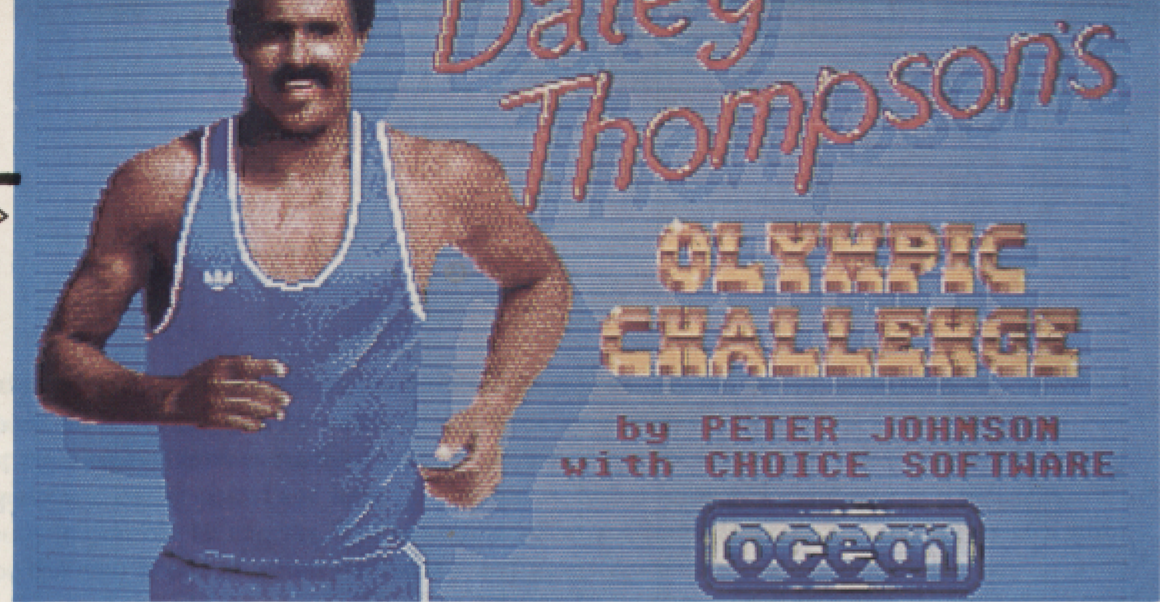
A joystick in Port Two is used to move Pogo. Pressing the fire button while stationary causes Pogo to spit bubble-bursting bullets, whereas a tap on the fire button while moving left or right makes him jump in the respective directions. Lifts are activated by pushing either up or down on the joystick depending on which direction it will move.

Negotiate the maze-like pathways of Fusion in your Assault Crawler.



In the unlikely event that your previews disk is faulty, pop it in some sturdy packaging and send it (along with your name and address) to Cover Disk Replacement, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. An SAE will speed up the process of replacing your disk, but please allow up to 28 days for delivery.

NEWS



OCEAN'S SEOUL TRAIN

BRITISH athletes and Olympic Gold Medalists are a bit like bananas and gravy – they don't really go together. But if you were to sit down and make a list of recent successes, one man would undoubtedly stand proud – and that's our great all-rounder, Daley Thompson. Daley made his binary debut almost four years ago in Ocean's **Daley Thompson's Decathlon,** and resurfaced in **Daley's Supertest** two years later – both on 8-bit. Now he's hit the big time by appearing prominently in **Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge** on the ST and Amiga. And this time around, Lucozade and sports-wear giants Adidas are involved.

Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge is effectively split into two sections. First it's a quick training session in the gymnasium, in which Daley has to beef himself up and fill bottles of Lucozade in the process. Once Daley's proved his worth in the gym, it's out onto the track and field to compete in the decathlon (that's ten events, including the 100m sprint, 400m, 1500m, pole vault, 110m hurdles, javelin, shot put, and discus), which is played under Olympic qualifying standards with a realistic points system (so you have to waggle the joystick like Billy-o if you want to get anywhere). But where do Adidas come into the equation? Simple. To perform well you need to have the correct footwear.

The man behind the ST conversions of **Arkanoid** and **Wizball** – Paul Johnson – is writing **Daley Thompson's Olympic Challenge** in conjunction with Choice, and it should be ready in time for the Olympic Games in Seoul. Expect to see a full review in the next issue.

Between events you are treated to some super soaraway Sunsational headlines, complete with digitised pictures of Daley.

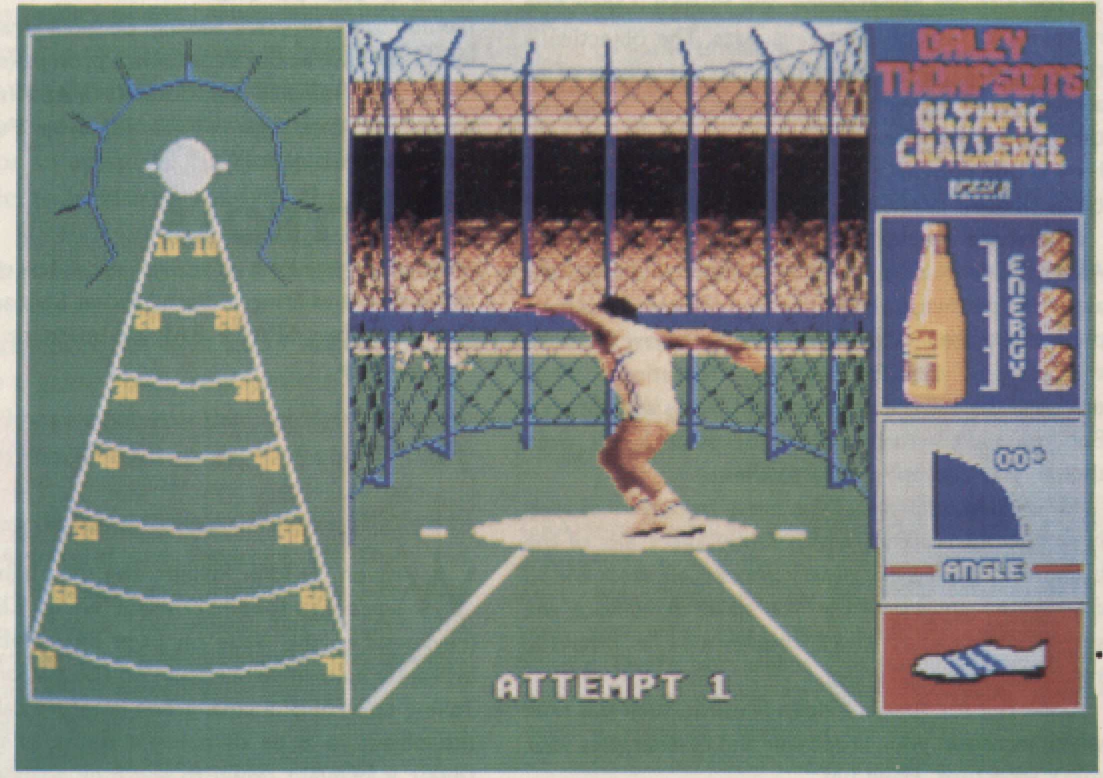

FIRST EDITION

THE DALEY PAPER

Lucozade FOR ENERGY

DALEY THOMPSON - SEOUL MAN!

BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH BLAH ...



One of the two events nearing completion – the discus. Large digitised images of Daley are used to create realistic scenes of animation, making the throw a sight to behold.

A digitised Daley runs for all he's worth in the 100m sprint. The view of the stadium to the right of the picture scrolls in the 400m and 1500m events.





BLAZING BARRELS

IT SURE AS HELL GETS MY VOTE!



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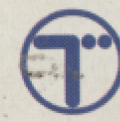
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OCEAN STILL STEAMING AHEAD

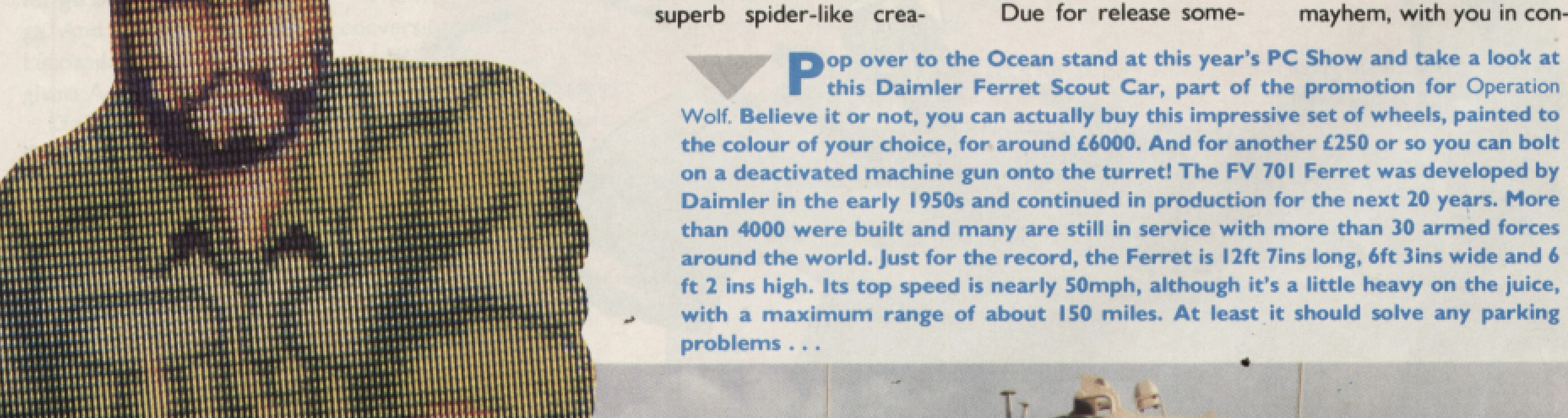
COME Christmas, two coin-op conversions will be fighting it out for the number one spot – Activision's **Afterburner** and Ocean's **Operation Wolf.** Activision are loath to show anything until the PC Show, so no-one other than Activision staff know whether or not Jez San has managed to pull it off. Ocean, on the other hand, aren't so shy, and it's plain to see that their conversions are looking very good. Both the ST and Amiga versions are almost identical to the coin-op, which isn't surprising as the French team behind it have dumped most of the arcade original onto the 16-bit machines and condensed it from a staggering nine disks down to a more respectable three.

Also under development is an impressive looking filled 3D shoot 'em up of sorts, which is as yet untitled. Originally intended as a **Battlezone**-style game, it's turned into something far more involved. There are ten planets to explore, each with its own distinctive scenery, problems to overcome and alien types to erradicate – in fact there are over 50 different aliens planned, from tanks and fighters to superb spider-like creatures and spinning crystaline structures which shoot off shards when you get too close. More details and screenshots next issue.

Due for release sometime around November are four Konami coin-op conversions – for the Amiga only. First up is **Gryzor,** featuring seven sections of shoot 'em up mayhem, with you in con-

Nearing completion for a Christmas release, Ocean's conversion of Operation Wolf **bears a striking resemblence to its arcade parent.**





Pop over to the Ocean stand at this year's PC Show and take a look at this Daimler Ferret Scout Car, part of the promotion for Operation Wolf. **Believe it or not, you can actually buy this impressive set of wheels, painted to the colour of your choice, for around £6000. And for another £250 or so you can bolt on a deactivated machine gun onto the turret! The FV 701 Ferret was developed by Daimler in the early 1950s and continued in production for the next 20 years. More than 4000 were built and many are still in service with more than 30 armed forces around the world. Just for the record, the Ferret is 12ft 7ins long, 6ft 3ins wide and 6 ft 2 ins high. Its top speed is nearly 50mph, although it's a little heavy on the juice, with a maximum range of about 150 miles. At least it should solve any parking problems . . .**

trol of crack commando Lance Gryzor on a mission to penetrate and destroy enemy bases. There's even more horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up action to be found in **Green Beret,** as you take on an entire army of soldiers, parachutists and the like.

The multi-directional scrolling shoot 'em up delights of **Jackal** are also set to hit your screens, along with the cream of the crop – **Combat School,** a gruelling series of button pounding events including an assault course, two shooting ranges and arm wrestling, among other things.

And the conversions don't stop there. Ocean have plenty more planned for release later this year on both ST and Amiga, including the Taito beat 'em up **Renegade,** the hack 'em up **Rastan Saga,** and SNK's vertical scrolling shoot 'em ups **Victory Road** (the sequel to **Ikari Warriors**) and **Guerilla Wars**. But perhaps the most interesting of all their conversions is **Robocop,** an as yet unreleased Data East coin-op based on the block-busting film starring Peter Weller as the future of law enforcement – the cyborg Robocop. In the preproduction version we saw, you control Robocop, and, in keeping with the film, you shoot everyone remotely nasty in sight. Between the horizontal (and occasionally vertical) scrolling levels, there's a bonus stage which takes the form of a shooting range with visual effects similar to those seen in the film. Conversion work is underway, and we should be seeing both coin-op and conversions before Christmas.

Design your very own detailed, eight-colour sprites with SEUCK's Sprite Editor.

SEUCK IT AND SEE...

IF YOU'VE ever wanted to write your own vertically scrolling shoot 'em ups but just can't be bothered to learn how to program, Outlaw's **Shoot 'Em Up Construction Kit** should be of interest. It's a very straightforward mouse-driven utility – or rather, several mini-utilities bolted together to form one big utility – which allows you to produce sprites, scenery, sound effects, and ultimately a playable, independently-loaded game. To give you an idea of what can be done with **SEUCK,** it may be of interest to learn that it was used (admittedly in a slightly bastardised form) to create the backdrops for Palace's **Barbarian II.** Coo.

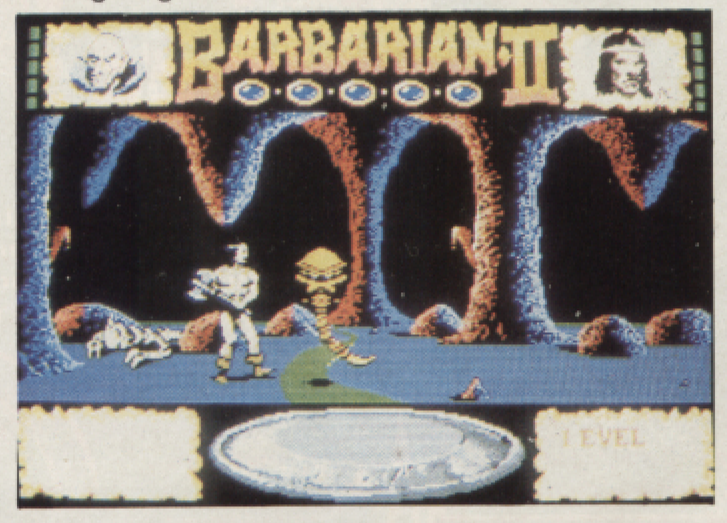


SEUCK is being converted from Sensible Software's 8-bit original (they also conceived **Wizball**) by Richard Leinfellner, the man who made such a good job of converting Palace's **Barbarian** to the Amiga. A release date is set for sometime around the end of September – provided Richard finds the time to complete his other project . . . **Barbarian II.**

Barbarian II: The Dungeon Of Drax sees the return of the barbarian, along with Ms Whittaker (who, you may remember, adorned the packaging of **Barbarian**) and of course, the evil wizard Drax. The objective is once again to dispose of the seemingly immortal magician, only this time around there are four separately loaded levels to explore, some problems to overcome, and plenty of odd creatures to fight, such as a mutant chicken, a fat jailer, a big cat and even the little green fellow who removed corpses so delicately from the playfield of **Barbarian.** Neat touches and gory samples abound in what promises to be a thoroughly entertaining blend of arcade adventure and beat 'n' hack 'n' chop 'em up. Full review next issue . . .

And once you've designed your sprites and frames of animation, get them moving by means of the Object Editor. Now all that's left to do is put them into a game . . .

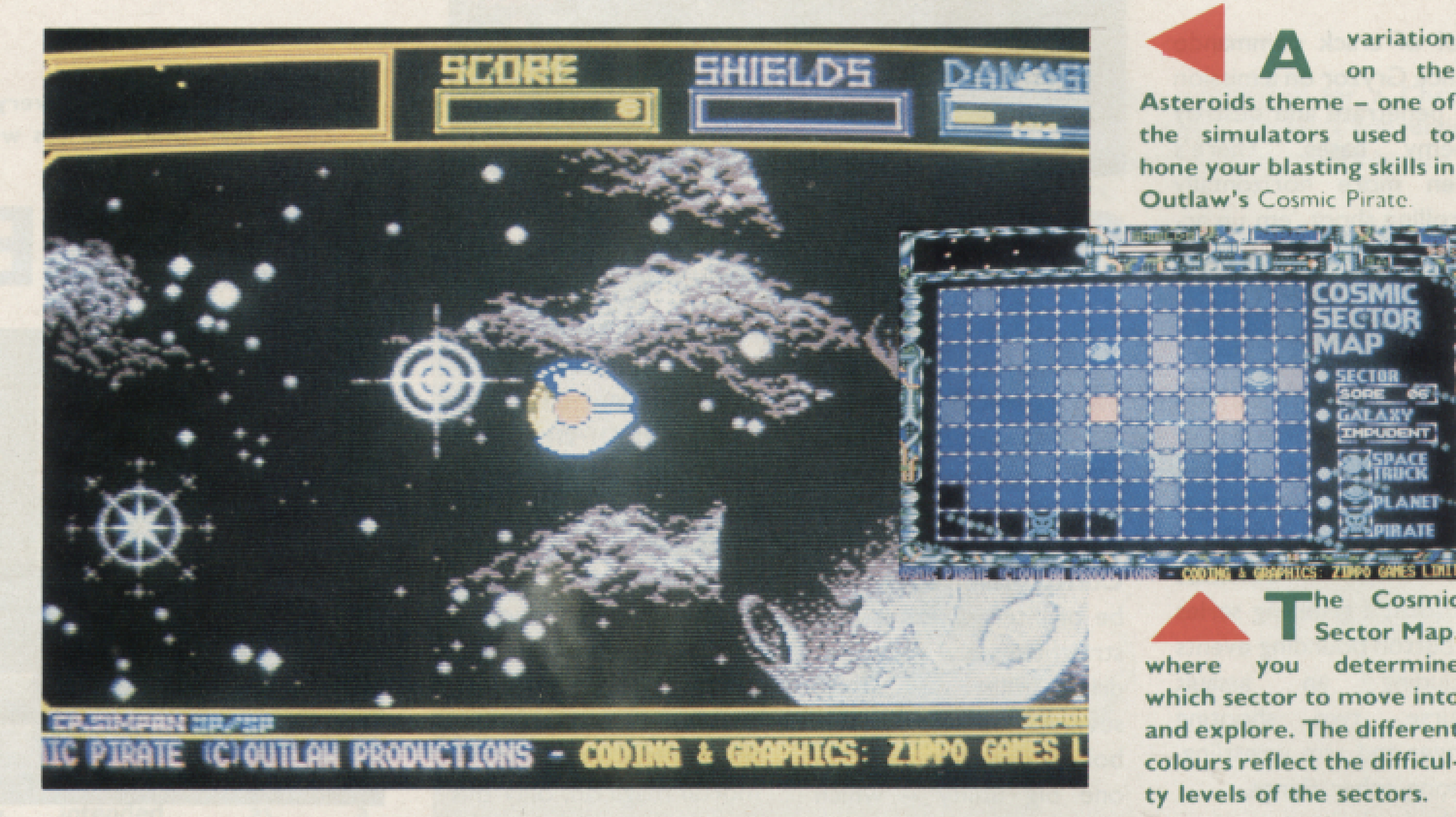
More gore galore in Palace's sequel to Barbarian.



The barbarian encounters the overweight jailer that patrols Drax's dungeon in Barbarian II. **It's worth noting that Palace have decided to vastly improve the quality of the graphics over the original.**



Finally, on the Outlaw front, there's **Cosmic Pirate.** Written by ex-Binary Design chaps Zippo Games, it's an odd mix of shoot 'em up styles in which you have to practice computer game simulators to earn enough money to embark on one of many missions. Most of the simulators are based on ageing coin-ops, while the missions take the form of multi-directional scrolling shoot 'em ups set in space. **Cosmic Pirate** is rapidly nearing completion and should be ready for review in Issue Two.



A variation on the Asteroids theme – one of the simulators used to hone your blasting skills in Outlaw's Cosmic Pirate.

The Cosmic Sector Map, where you determine which sector to move into and explore. The different colours reflect the difficulty levels of the sectors.



Ben Richards (Arnold Schwarzenegger) is introduced to the audience of the eponymous futuristic game show before going out to play with Fireball, Dynamo and Buzzsaw – to name but three adversaries he encounters.

RUNNING MAN

After Datasoft's **Conan The Barbarian** and Activision's **Predator,** the third Arnold Schwarzennegger film to be turned into a computer game is **The Running Man.** Grandslam have acquired the licence to produce a binary interpretation of the 18-rated film, which is premiered in Britain in September. Based on Stephen King's 'Bachman Book' short story of the same name, **The Running Man** is set some 30 years into the future and sees our Arnold playing Ben Richards, a policeman framed beyond belief and as a result trapped as a contestant in a bizarre, sadistic TV game show of the future in which convicted criminals are killed in a series of barbaric games. **The Running Man** is due for release on the ST and Amiga in February of next year, coinciding with the video release of the film.

DRILLER: IT'S A GAS

BERKSHIRE-based software house Incentive are soon to unleash their first ST and Amiga products. There are three releases planned, all puzzle solving games based around a solid 3D graphics system called Freescape (TM). Top of the list is **Driller,** which is almost complete and due to see the light of day in time for the next issue. It takes place on a moon which is soon to explode and your objective is to explore its 18 sections, releasing gas by means of a drilling rig (hence the title) to prevent the impending disaster. **Driller's** 18 sections feature buildings to search and obstacles to negotiate, and problems range from opening hidden doorways to crossing seemingly impassable holes. Early next year we should see the sequel, **Dark Side,** which is effectively more of the same, and there's the possibility of the sequel to the sequel in late '89.

Inside one of the buildings found on Mitral, the moon on which Driller's **action takes place. The pyramids are shields and energy supplies, just in case you were wondering.**



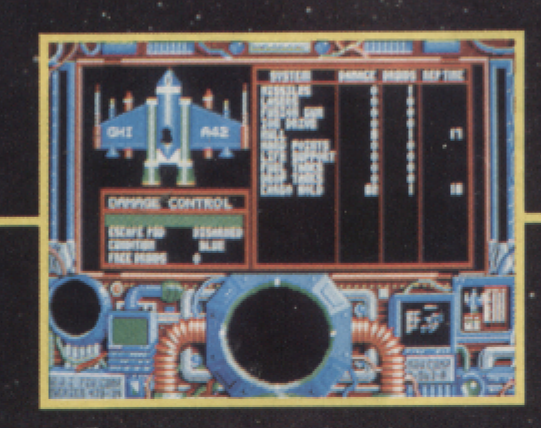
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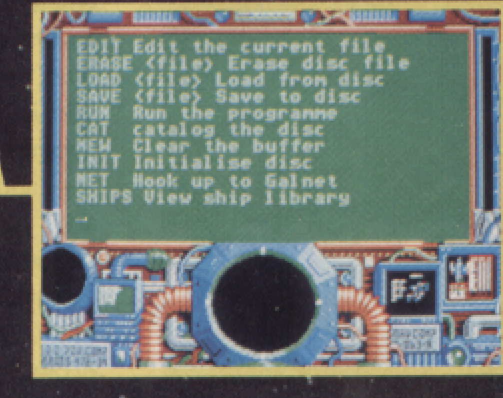


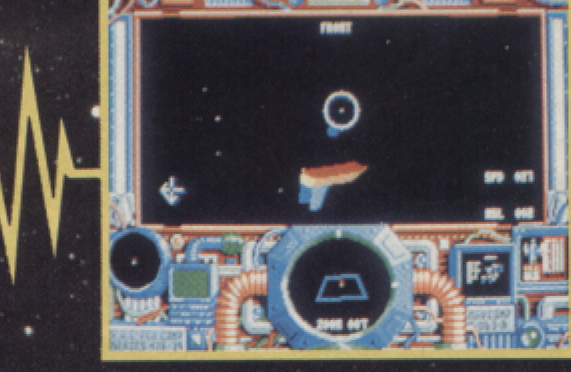
The universe stretches before you. 8 million worlds await your exploitation. Unimaginable wealth is your destiny if you can master the art of interstellar navigation, harness the intricacies of the photon drive and repel the deadly space pirates. Forget the medals, forget the honours, forget the glory. As a member of the Federation of Free Traders you live for money and will probably die for it.



FEDERATION OF FREE TRADERS







Screen shots from Atari ST version.

ILLUSTRATION: PETER ANDREW JONES.
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ATARI ST/AMIGA
£29.99



Gremlin Graphics Software Ltd.,
Alpha House, 10 Carver Street,
Sheffield S1 4FS. Tel: 0742 753423

CINEMAWARE GET SPORTY



The kick is away! TV Sports Football.

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THREE potentially outstanding Cinemaware titles are due to make an appearance before the year is out, courtesy of Mirrorsoft. Set for a late September release on the Amiga is the long-awaited **Rocket Ranger**, which is currently being tweaked to work on Amiga A500s. Produced by the team that brought you **Defender Of The Crown, Rocket Ranger** is based on the Republic wartime serial King of the Rocket Men. Equipped with a rocket suit and ray gun sent from scientists in the 21st century, it's up to you to save the world from Nazi domination. Film-like presentation and strategic planning is interspersed with arcade-style sequences, including a 3D shoot out with a Zeppelin and plenty of fisticuffs. ST and PC versions are likely to hit the streets earlier next year.

Nearing completion to appear on the Amiga in January of next year is **TV Sports Football**, the first in a series of sports



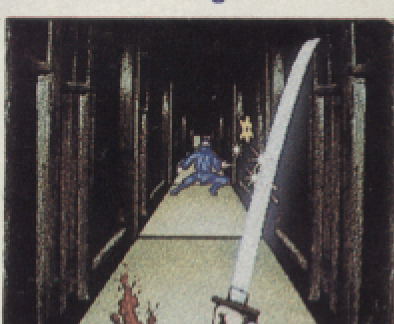
simulations bearing all the stylish hallmarks of a typical Cinemaware production. American football fans can look forward to getting to grips with 28 teams and a 16-game season complete with play-offs, plus all the neat touches we've come to expect from Cinemaware. Where **TV Sports Football** differs from previous simulations of this type is the way that it's presented as if you're watching a televised game, which means pre-game shows, half-time shows complete with top-heavy cheerleaders, and a highly effective and realistic view of the action.

Take on a squadron of Nazi fighters in a Space Harrier-style 3D shoot 'em up. One of many neat arcade sequences in Rocket Ranger.

An attractive title screen sets the scene for Cinemaware's Lords Of The Rising Sun.



Finally, there's **Lords Of The Rising Sun**, which should be available on the Amiga in November, with ST and PC versions to follow early next year. Set in 12th century Japan, you play the lead character in an historically accurate, far eastern civil war, which you have to win in order to become Shogun. Predictably, strategy and arcade sequences are combined in style, although it must be said that this looks like being their biggest and best project to date.



Outstanding graphics feature prominently.



CONVERSIONS GALORE FROM MEDIAGENIC

Mediagenic, or Activision as they used to be known, have a multitude of ST and Amiga releases in the pipeline, some of which should see the light of day before Christmas. On the coin-op conversions front there's Sega's **SDI** and **Afterburner**, and Irem's **R-Type**, all of which seem to be coming along quite nicely.

The licence to produce a game based on the new Bruce Willis movie Die Hard was recently snapped up by Mediagenic, along with five new Sega coin-ops, the conversions of which are due for release during 1989. There's the incredibly high speed 3D shoot 'em up **Galaxy Force**, the recently unleashed **Altered Beast**, the slightly off-beat driving game **Hot Rod**, **Sonic Boom**, and a volleyball simulation entitled **Ace Attacker**.

Pleasantly surprising is the fact that Mediagenic do have some original product – more imminently, **The Incredible Shrinking Sphere**. Due to appear in January, it sees you guiding a sphere (what else) through eight large plains. Pressure pads dotted about the play area increase or decrease the size of the sphere, hence the title, and it's a feature which is used to negotiate certain problems encountered along the way.



Altered Beast is an innovative variation on the beat 'em up theme, and is one title which should convert exceptionally well. Either one or two players punch, kick and jump their way through graveyards, dark marshes, jungles, caves and enchanted palaces, and there are plenty of weird and wonderful creatures encountered along the way. The neat bit is that both players can transform into different creatures with special powers.

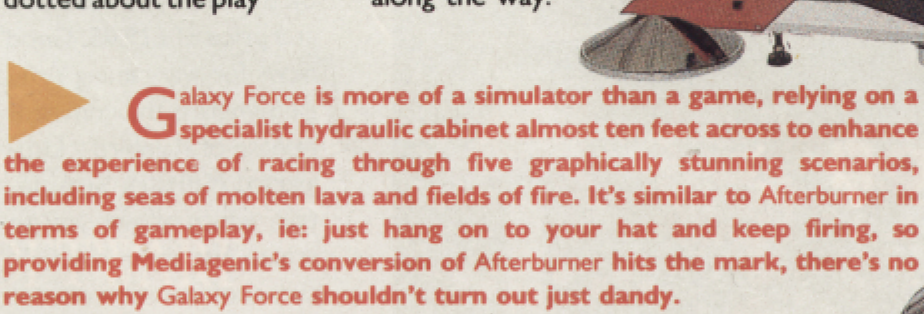


Missile Command-style shoot'em up mayhem in space... Mediagenic's ST conversion of Sega's SDI.

Bruce Willis takes a break from Moonlighting to dish out hefty does of death and destruction in his first silver screen appearance, Die Hard. No doubt he'll do the same on the 16-bit machines.

The unofficial tributes to R-Type are starting to appear thick and fast. But this doesn't seem to worry Mediagenic, who are confident that their officially licensed conversion should put the others in the shade when it appears later this year. This is the ST version, and it's looking fine...





Galaxy Force is more of a simulator than a game, relying on a specialist hydraulic cabinet almost ten feet across to enhance the experience of racing through five graphically stunning scenarios, including seas of molten lava and fields of fire. It's similar to Afterburner in terms of gameplay, ie: just hang on to your hat and keep firing, so providing Mediagenic's conversion of Afterburner hits the mark, there's no reason why Galaxy Force shouldn't turn out just dandy.

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TELECOMSOFT BONANZA

On the scrounge for odds and sods inside a tree... Offbeat arcade adventure action with Verminator.



FIREBIRD and Rainbird's releases for Christmas and the new year are shaping up to be some of their best yet. Almost four years since the original 8-bit incarnation made its mark, Firebird are set to release their long overdue ST and Amiga conversions of Braben and Bell's timeless classic, **Elite**. The immensely popular blend of trading and blasting has been tweaked slightly, and now boasts filled 3D graphics and icons used for the purposes of trading. Full review next month...

The title **EPT** will ring bells with anyone who gets the Telecomsoft newsletter, as it was featured many months back and billed for release later this year. Realtime is the team behind **EPT**, which is in a similar vein to **Elite** in that it involves trading and blasting and it's set in space. It's a project which has been in development for the past two years, during which time it's undergone several name changes – more recently from **EPT** to **STAR** (**Space Time and Relativity**) and now **Frontier**. "If you thought **Carrier Command** was big," says **Carrier** programmer Ian Oliver, "then you won't believe the size of **EPT**. The specification consists of two, inch-thick volumes, and it's very much a two-disk product." Wow. However, it seems that **EPT**'s size and complexity has resulted in a few delays, so it's unlikely to appear until next year. Ah well...

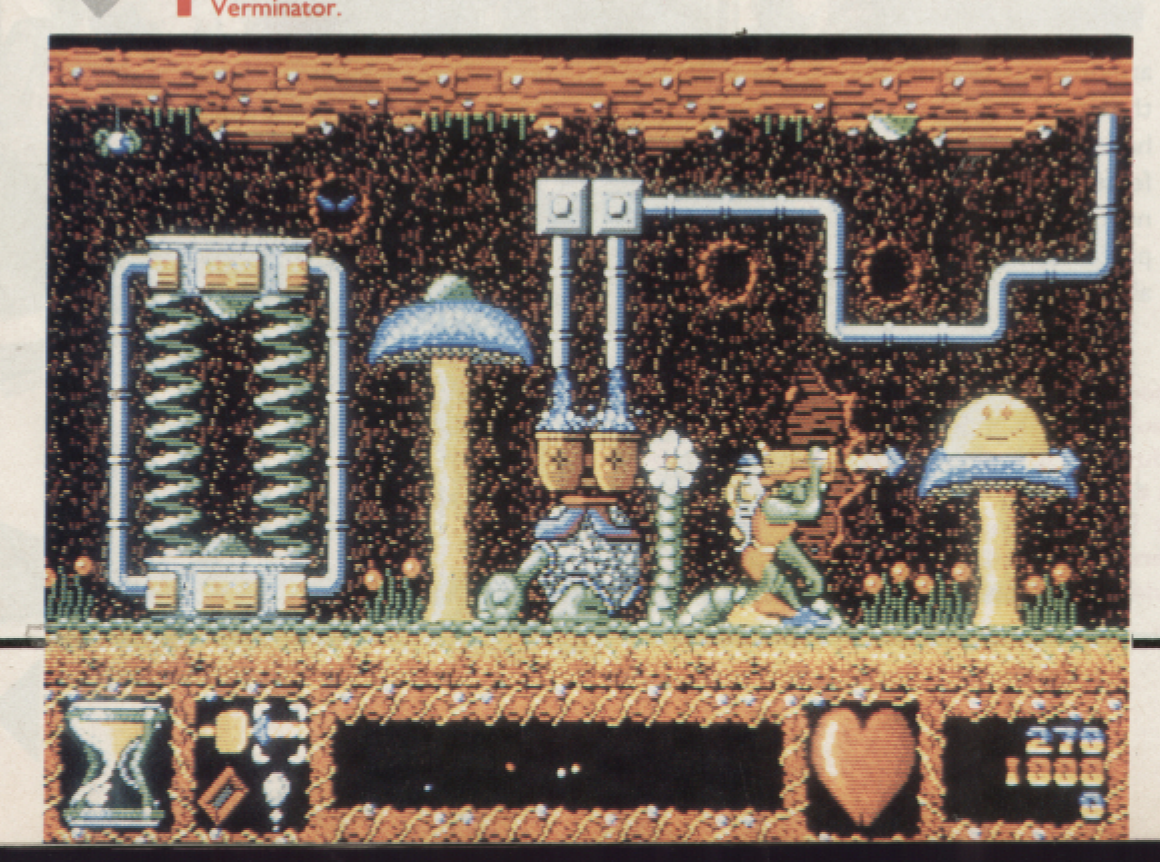
Other interesting projects which should definitely see the light of day before the end of the year are a rather tasty-looking multi-directional scrolling shoot 'em up from Paul Shirley, author of the 8-bit classic **Spindizzy**. And there's a new concept from man behind **The Sentinel** – Geoff Crammond, although Firebird's Colin Fuidge wouldn't say much about it, other than "it's odd and it's billiant".

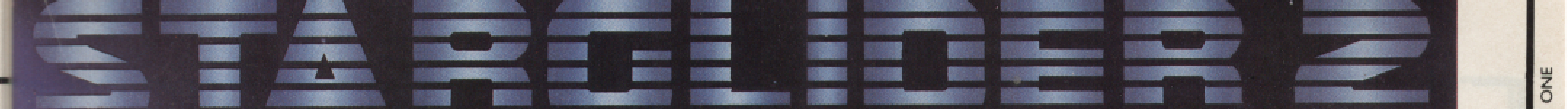
Verminator, the bizarre arcade adventure set in a tree, is almost complete on the ST and ready for a November release, and the finishing touches have been put to the Amiga version of David Braben's **Virus**. It should be on the streets by the time you read this, at a price of £19.95. Good news for wargaming Amiga owners is the imminent release of Rainbird's **Universal Military Simulator**, which allows you to create just about any military confrontation of your choice and even set armies of different eras against each other. And in case ST owning **UMS** players feel a little left out, it's worth noting that Rainbird should have their **UMS** scenario disks out before the end of the year, at a price yet to be fixed.

But what of Sandy White's mega-project, **Dick Special**? Find out next month...

Two stills from ST Elite. **A view from your ship (top), and the new-look trading screen.**

There are some pretty strange creatures and objects to be found in Verminator.





In the beginning there was a void, a blank memory without form or purpose.

And ARGONAUT Software looked upon the void and said . . .

'LET THERE BE FLIGHT'
. . . and there was STARGLIDER.

And as time progressed, the art of three dimensional solid graphics became known unto the ARGONAUTS, and they rejoiced.

And they said . . .

'LET US CREATE THE ULTIMATE PROGRAM, TO HAVE DOMINION OVER ALL OTHER PROGRAMS IN THE UNIVERSE'

. . . and there was a blinding light and the Earth spat fire and trembled.

And as the fire diminished and the vapours cleared, the fruits of their labours emerged from out of the chaos.

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. . . A VOYAGE INTO THE THIRD DIMENSION.

BY ARGONAUT SOFTWARE

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Federa[t] Free T[r]

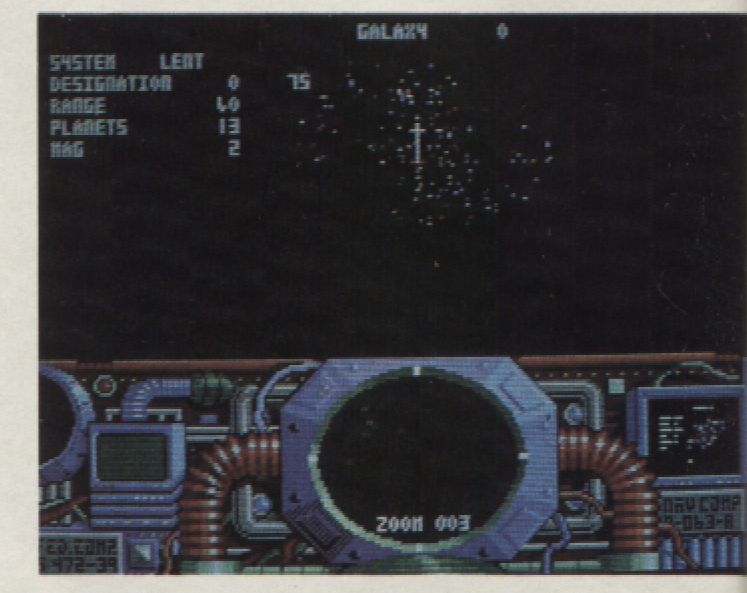
Take a sizeable slice of filled 3D shoot 'em up, throw in an element of trading and mix it all up with some extra thrills and spills and plenty of neat touches for good measure. The result? A very tasty piece of software from Gremlin. Gary Penn enjoys his launch...

So what is the Federation Of Free Traders? It was formed in 2079 after man began colonising other planets and needed more than just an efficient delivery service. Space pirates were rife and so traders had to rely on safety in numbers – the numbers grew, and the Federation was formed.

As a new recruit, you start inside a space station just off the planet Iles, with the objective of reaching the highest rank – through cadet to Commander and eventually Admiral. To do this you need in excess of 9,000 points. One of the best ways to earn points is to embark on and complete one of the 15 different missions, varying from the simple delivery of a message, to investigating strange disappearances and seek and destroy missions. Your rank also affects the mission's toughness – the higher your rank, the harder the mission. However, it's worth bearing in mind that points awarded depend on the difficulty of the mission. Another way to earn points is by shooting hostiles – but don't shoot any friendly craft, as you lose points. There are over 32 different types of ship to be found, all with varying degrees of intelligence – and some are more aggressive than others. So don't antagonise, just fight to survive, and don't rely on missiles as they can be jammed.

The ship has three weapons systems – primary, secondary and tertiary. Basic lasers are fitted as standard, but the secondary and tertiary systems are a matter for you and your bank balance. There are six types of drive available, five types of lasers (long range), three types of missile (also long range), four types of Plasma Projectors and Gauss guns, and sand. Sand? Yeah, sand – dump it in space and it rips through most things that get in the way.

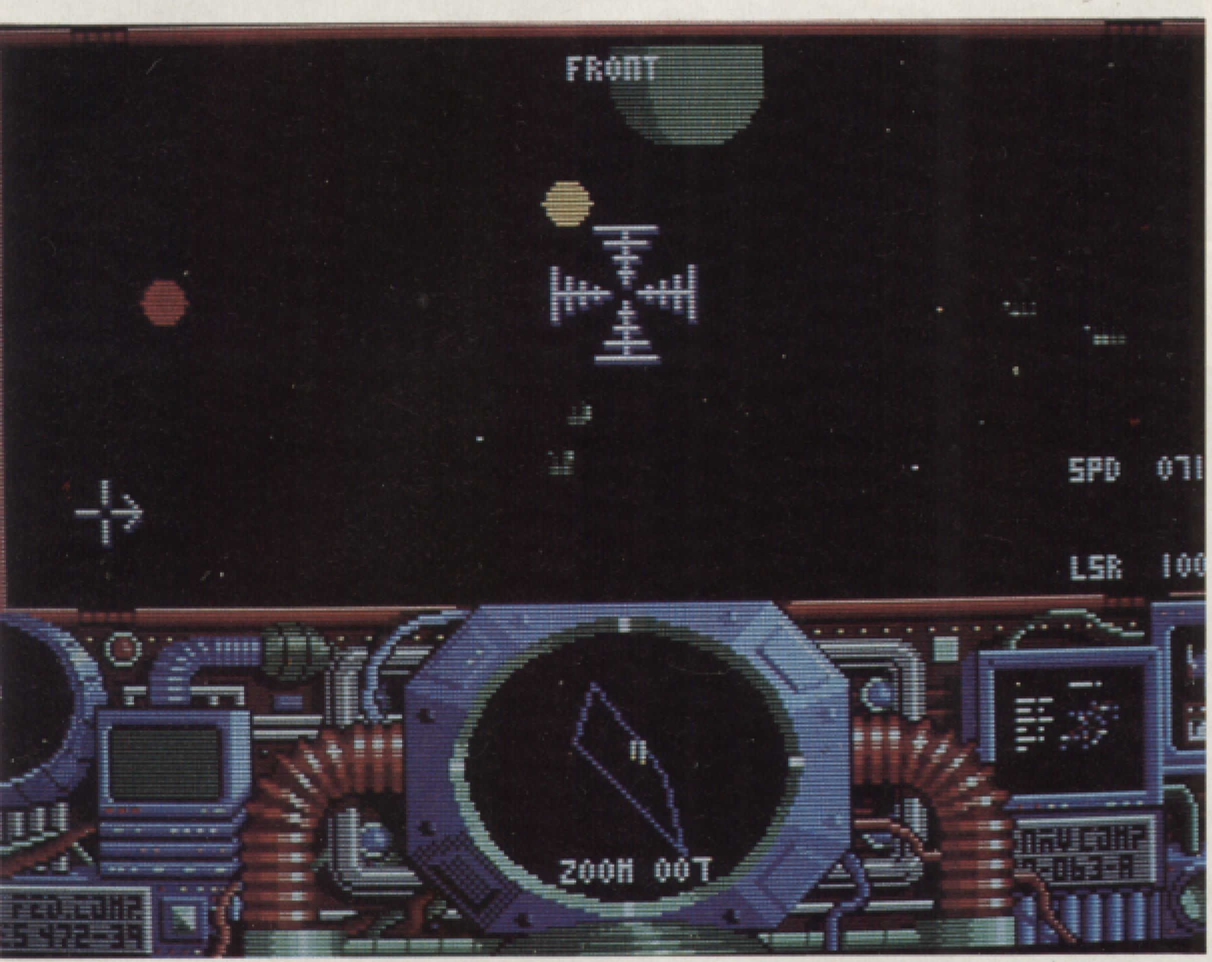
But before you can buy anything, you need money. And to get money you need to trade proficiently. You trade for money, and use the money to improve your ship. The better your ship, the better your chances of rising through the ranks. There's plenty to trade, including miscellaneous metals, gold, silver, weapons, food, textiles, machinery, wines, gems, furs, drugs, surgical equipment and transplant organs – uh? "Yeah, you can flog them to the military – they can always put them to good use," jests author Paul Blythe.



Use the navigation computer to plot your course through the galaxy (you can rotate the galaxy map through 360 degrees for a better look). If you wanted to simply fly from one side of a galaxy to the other at maximum speed, it would take roughly 65,000,000 hours – real time! (Source: Paul Blythe FOFT Trivia Archive.)

Certain planets are good trading ground, so good, in fact, that they are worth landing on. Having entered the atmosphere, you fly over vast solid 3D terrain, trenches, expanses of water, roads, mountains, hills, trees and even the occasional forest, with gun emplacements and tanks on hostile planets. The system map tells you whether you can land or not.

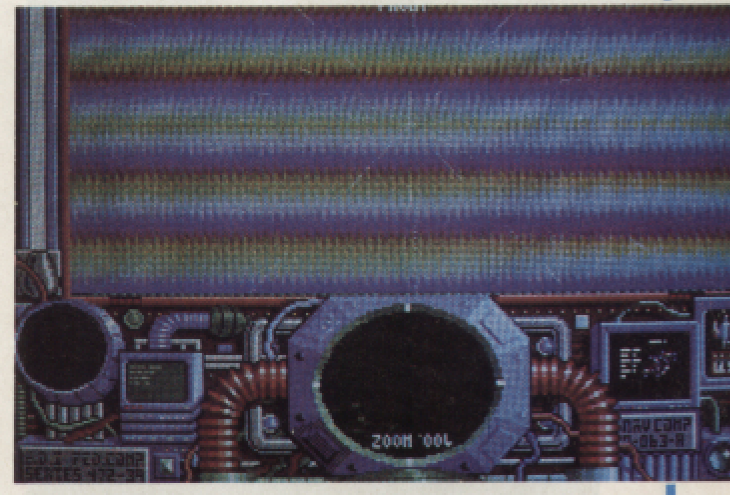
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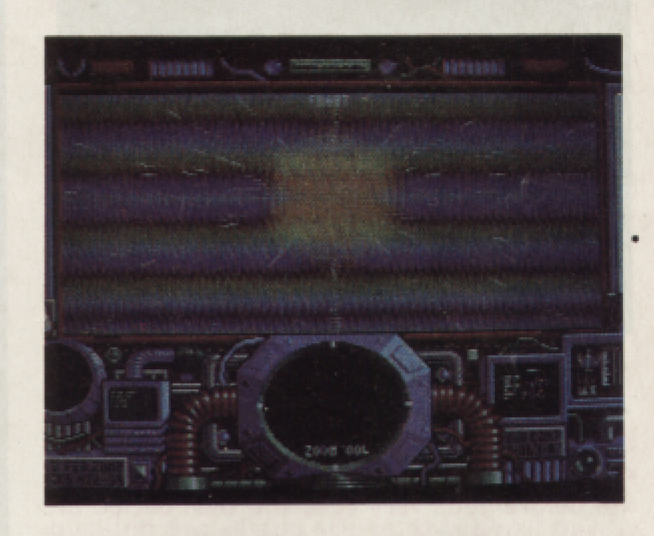


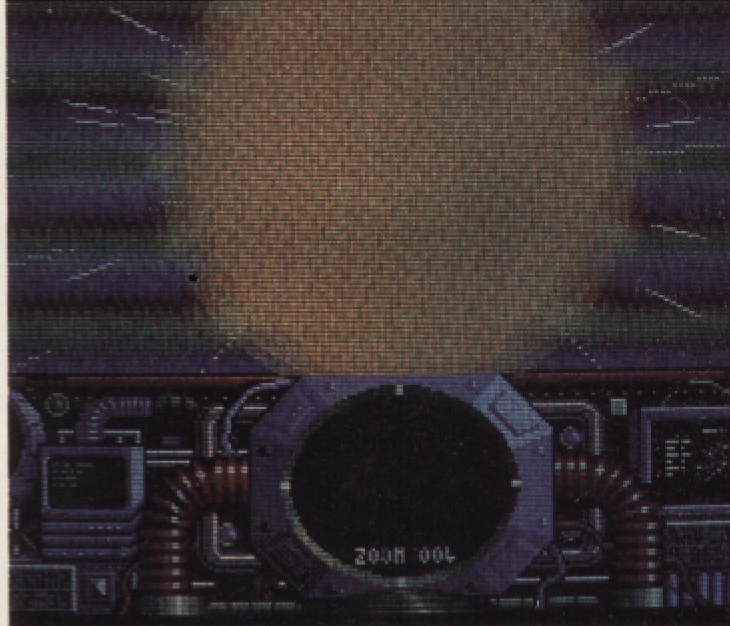
A view from the front of your craft. The arrow at the bottom left of the screen points you in the general direction of your target, and it's advisable to keep a beady eye on the radar in the centre of the instrumentation at the bottom of the picture. Careless pilots fly very short missions...

But all this zipping around willy nilly takes it out of your shields – and once they go, you're history... unless you use the escape pod. Arm it prior to your destruction to ensure that you get picked up afterwards. You lose your ship and cargo, but at least you get to keep any







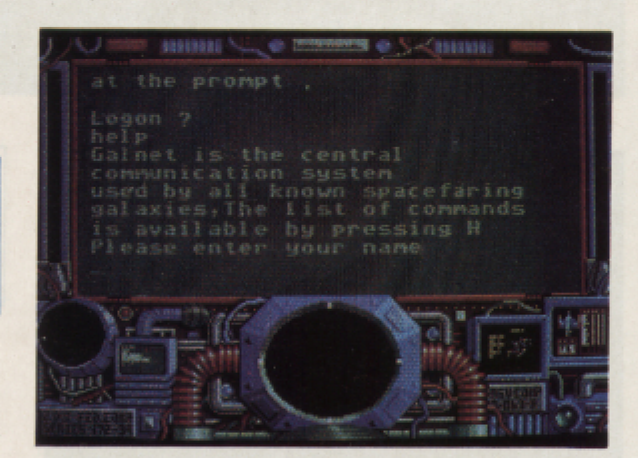


Having chosen your destination, activate the Stardrive and enter the colourful realm of hyperspace...





Undoubtedly one of FOFT's most novel features is your ship's onboard computer, Eddie. Call him up and you've got the galaxy at your fingertips (well, almost). Eddie's primary use is as a communications and trading device. You can identify and send messages to other friendly craft or better still, log on to the live one...

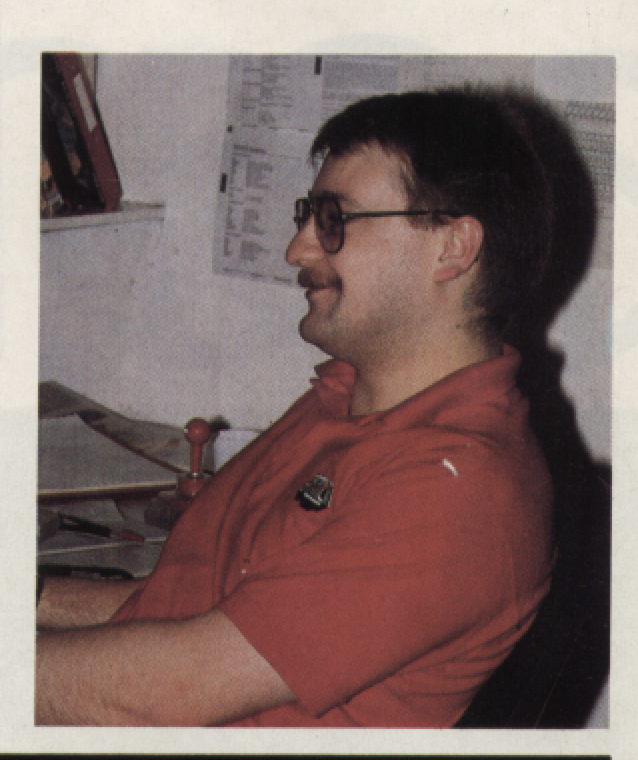


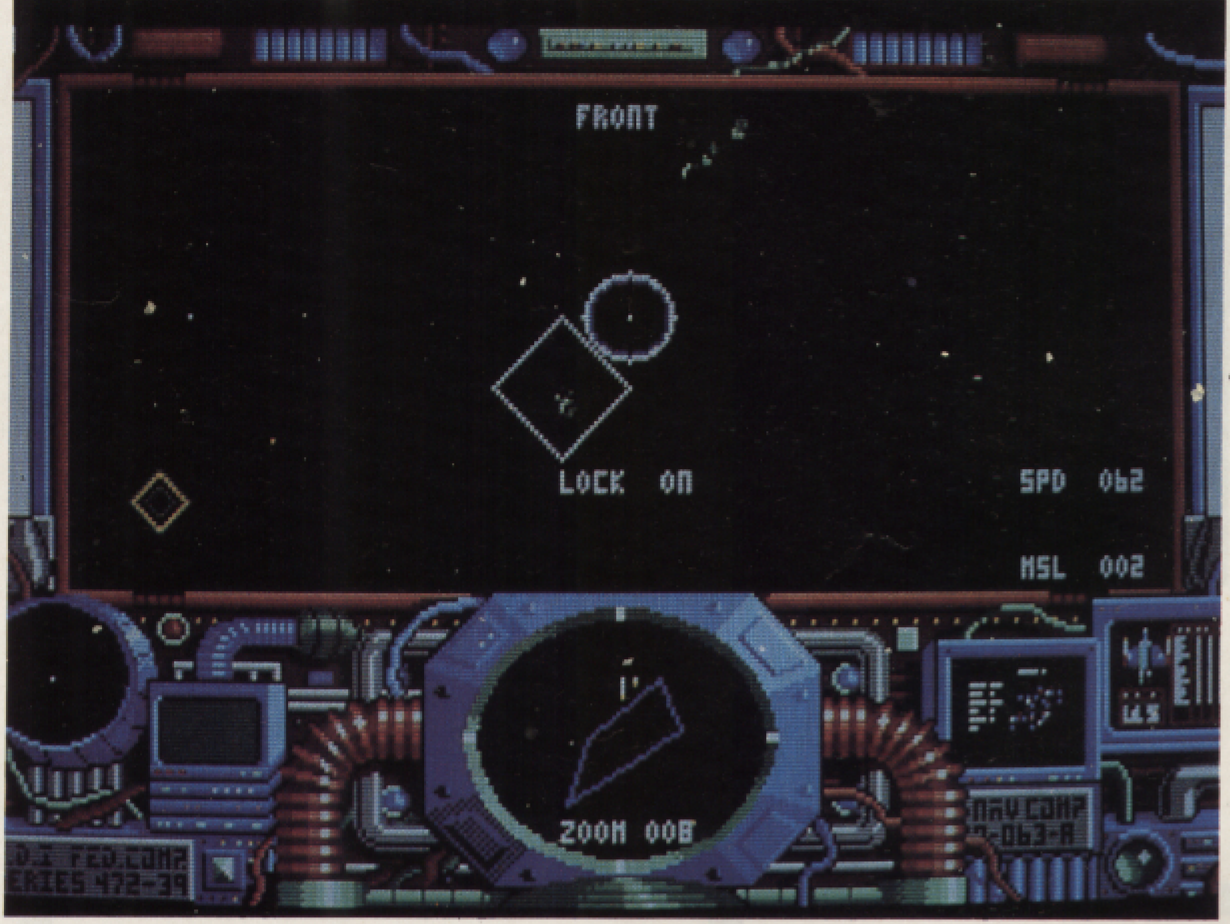
Galnet – the communications network with users across the whole galaxy – in its full green screen glory. Call up the prices of commod-ities, watch them fluctuate before your very eyes and then decide to buy or sell. You can sit around trading to your heart's content and maybe make a little dosh, but while your playing Mr Trader, life goes on – and you may just find yourself blown to pieces by an un-friendly life-form.

But there's more to life than making money and killing innocent beings. When you grow weary after a heavy day's trading and blasting, sit down and swot up on what's what... almost all of the ships you're likely to meet during your travels can be viewed via Eddie. And if you think you know it all, why not pursue a hobby? How about programming? Eddie has his own language for you to play with, including simplistic graphics routines and commands to access both disk and printer. It's called SIMPLE (Simplified Instruction Multi-purpose Programming Language for Eddie), although it's not quite so easy to learn as it may sound if you've never programmed in any language before. Still, if you're an eager beaver, you should find the comprehensive manual supplied extremely useful. There's a demonstration program supplied, and possibly, time permitting, a SIMPLE disk packed full of programs.

credits accumulated so you can buy a new ship and re-tread the beaten path. And just to make life in the space lanes a little more bearable, there's the option to save your game to disk.

The packaging features cover artwork by Peter Jones, perhaps better known for his Larry Niven book covers, and includes an extensive but comprehensive booklet covering all aspects of how to play and progress. There's also a music disk, featuring 20 soundtracks written by Gremlin's in-house musician, Ben Daglish. It features, apart from an original title screen score, two of Tchaikovsky's Nutcracker movements, three movements from Vivaldi's Four Seasons, and five movements from Handel's Water Music. At least your not stuck with Strauss' Blue Danube...





Your missiles are primed and ready to launch – now you've got a lock-on on the hostile craft ahead. Let rip and pray the beggars aren't in possession of superior jam-ming devices!

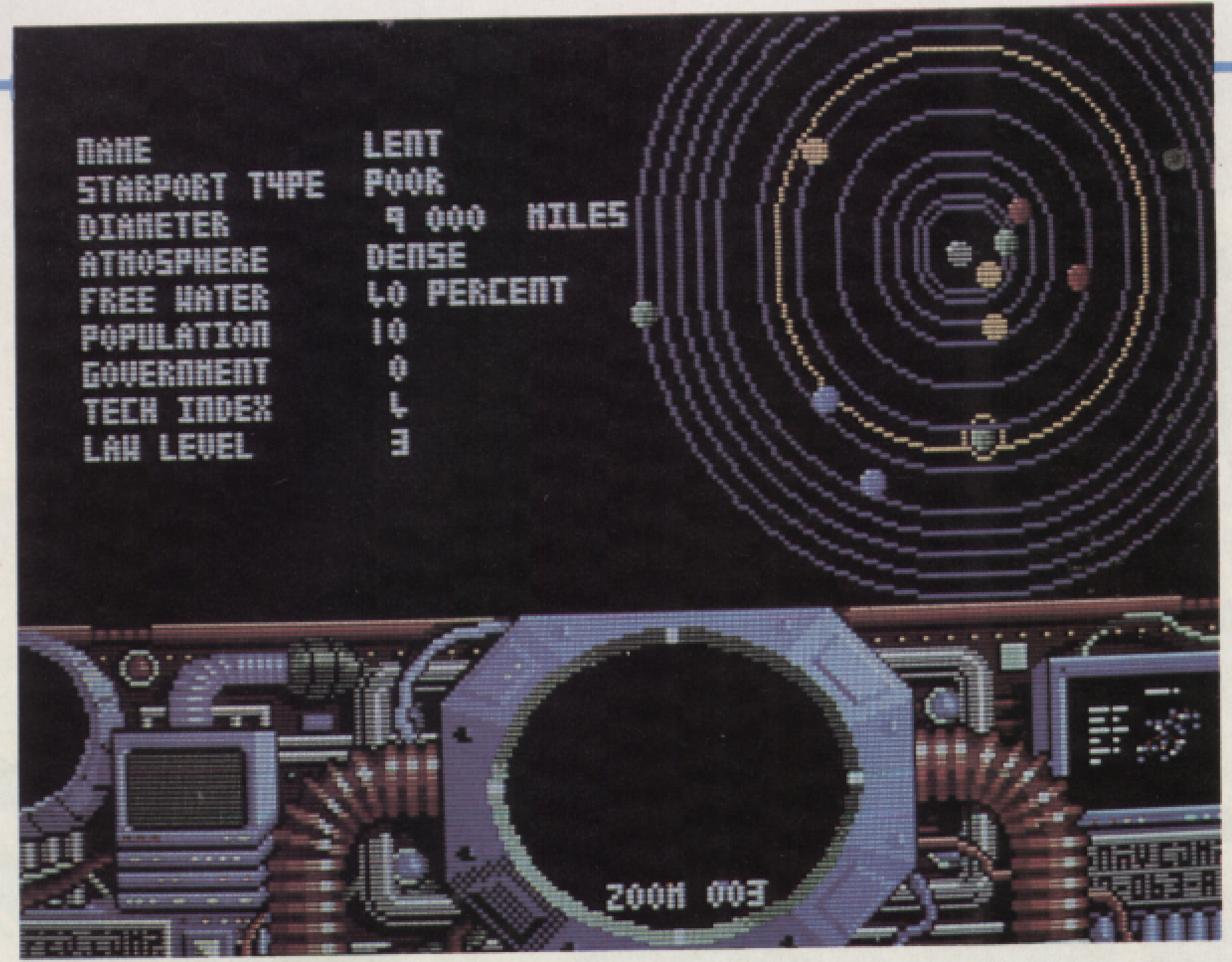


PAUL BLYTHE



Paul's programming frolics began at Sheffield Polytechnic where he was studying a course in Electronic Engineering which involved writing business software on an Apple system. His first commercial break came after replying to an advert from Mastertronic, and the result was an unreleased version of The Last V8 on the Apple.

After a short stint at Digital Integration he joined Gremlin, and helped out with Deflektor on the ST before writing his first game, 3D Galax – a rendition of that age-old arcade favourite Galaxians, with filled 3D graphics. Then came FOFT... "I love Braben and Bell's Elite," Paul confesses. "I played it and played it and thought it was brilliant, but there was always a feeling that it could have been taken further – although maybe not within the constraints of 8-bit. So I wrote 3D Galax as a test bed of routines in preparation for FOFT. It's taken about a year to write, with a fair bit of time spent looking at



With a system selected, it's wise to find out more about its planets – by means of the system map. The program generates psuedo-random factors about planets and then applies logic to them. For example, there could be a planet with no atmosphere but a population. Why? If the population is low, the planet could well be a transmission base for Galnet. A reasonable-sized population could indicate a military base – important, but not enough to make it habitable – while a high population is more than likely a race of intelligent robots. Using a similar process of deduction in conjunction with the information provided (eg: size, atmosphere, population, law and tech levels), you can determine which items are worth trading – if any. For example, a large water-based planet with a large population suggests an acquatic society, so it's obviously a good place to buy aquatic wares. And a planet with a high law level would mean you'd have little chance of selling any weapons.

Damage control, with a complete breakdown of the state of your craft. Here, your ship is fully armed but has sustained some hefty damage. Two repair droids are on the case, but these things take time – and in space, time costs more than money. You can always buy some more or better droids (finances permitting), but at the end of the day effective droid time-management is of the essence. Better still, avoid getting damaged in the first place.

how to make the maths involved in the 3D calculations work efficiently.

"There's been a lot of external input though, from friends and colleagues mainly, and I've attempted to incorporate all valid suggestions – even SIMPLE. Someone jokingly suggested: 'if there's a ship's computer, why not a language?' So we have. It's limited, but it is fast and can be a lot of fun. You can use it as an alternative form of entertainment when you want a break from playing FOFT. Basically, I like a game with plenty of long-term appeal, which is why I've attempted to cram in as much as possible. The only problem is when to stop – I could keep making additions and refinements, but then it'd never come out!

"What's next? It's a project provisionally entitled UK101, but I can't say too much about it at the moment – other than it's a simulator involving a helicopter."

ST Author Paul Blythe reckons that once proficient at playing FOFT, it would take approximately 75 hours of solid play time to complete – and even then you still won't have seen everything. Once you get engrossed, it's a claim difficult to dismiss. FOFT's definitely a big game, with plenty of blasting and trading fun to be had. The 3D graphics work well, although it must be said that as far as creating a stimulating playing environment is concerned, there is a weak point – and that's no true feeling of flight unless there are other objects on screen. It's a little confusing at first, as the stars don't rush towards you (Paul deems this "unrealistic"), and there's only a speedometer to inform you that you're moving. But once the shooting, ducking and diving starts, this small flaw is easily forgiven and ultimately ignored. Comparisons will undoubtedly be made between FOFT and Acornsoft/Firebird's Elite, but just how the conversion of Elite fares we won't know until next month. One thing's for sure though: Elite's going to be hard pushed to top FOFT.

PRICE: £24.95
RELEASE DATE: September

GRAPHICS	86%
SOUND	75%
PLAYABILITY	90%
VALUE	86%

OVERALL 89%



FOFT should be ready in time for the PC Show, all going well. Unsurprisingly, there won't be any major differences between this and the ST version – other than the music and sound effects.

'HANG ON IN THERE....'





ATARI ST screen shots shown.

COLOUR MONITOR REQUIRED

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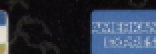
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"The definitive racing game ever for the ST"



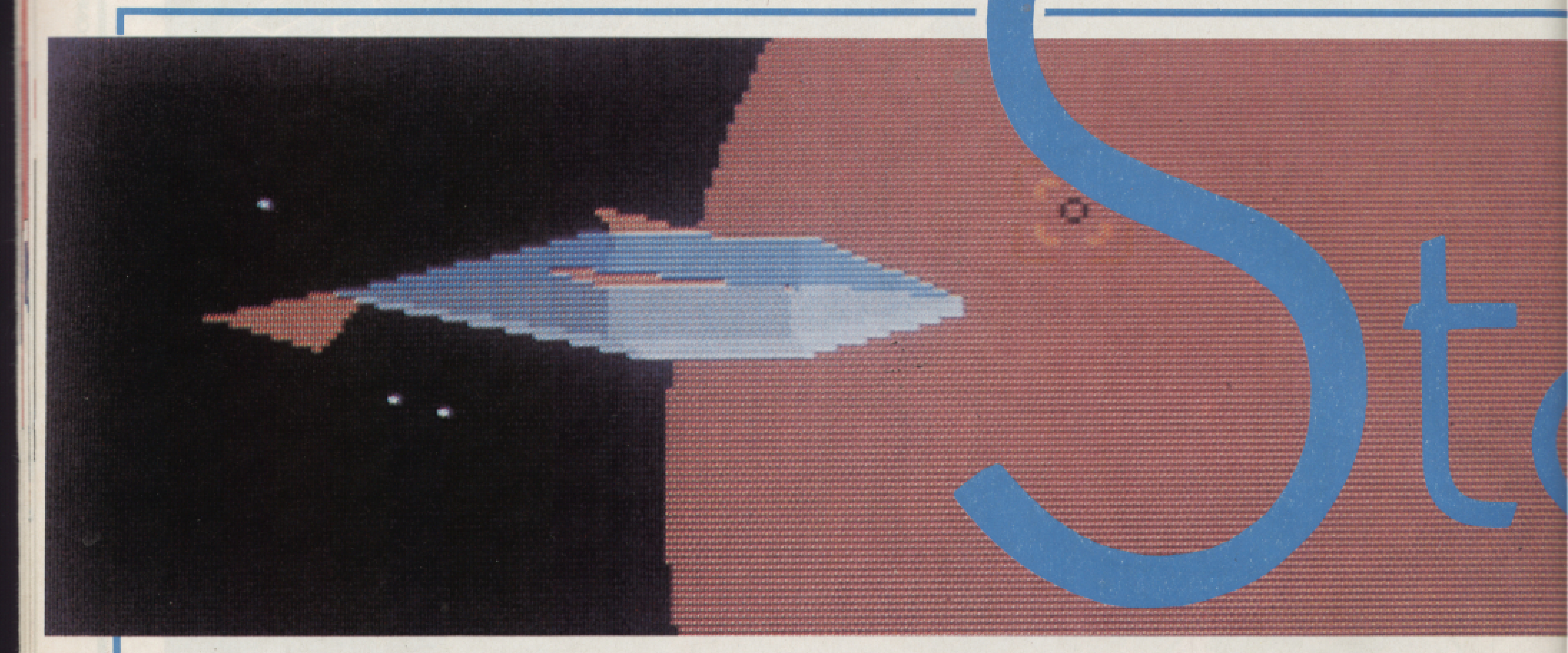






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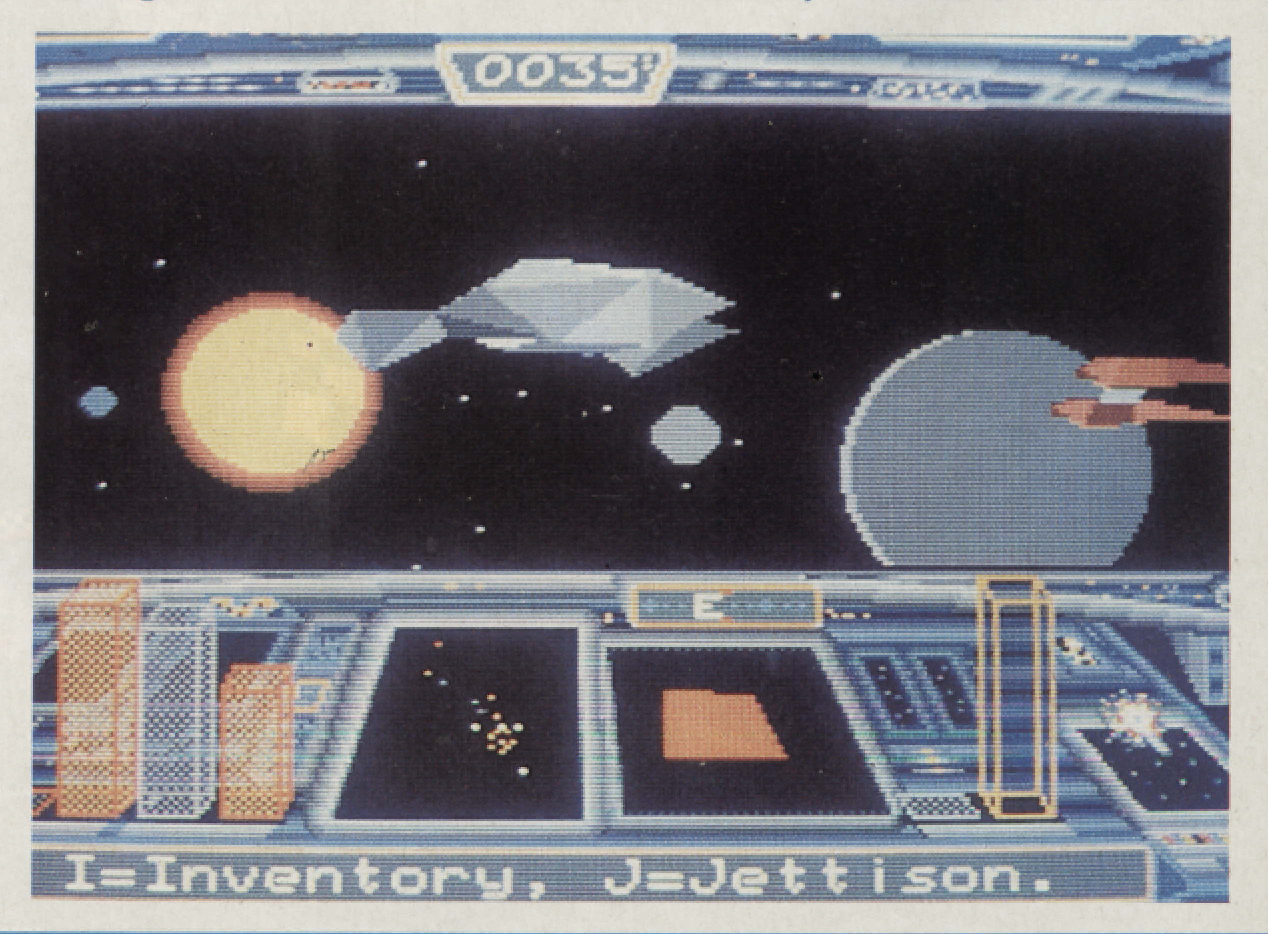
The true power of 16-bit machines is no more fully realised than when putting to task the manipulation of complex 3D images. Rainbird's Starglider II shows just how well that particular exercise can be achieved... as Steve Jarratt found to his amazement.

Following on from their earlier success with the wire-frame vector graphic shoot 'em up, **Starglider**, Jez Sans and his Argonaut Software team have spent the past 18 months creating an entire solar system to be explored – only this time it's all filled in, and colourful, too. The system comprises five planets and their moons, all orbiting the central star, Solice. An Egron invasion force (the bad guys from **Starglider**) have seized the whole system and are currently building a giant plasma beam weapon in orbit around the fifth planet. Protected by seven smaller projectors on the seven moons of the third planet, the completed beam weapon is to be used on the distant planet of Novenia – the sole opposition to the Egrons taking over the entire Galaxy.

To prevent the fall of Novenia (and consequently, the rest of the Galaxy) the aim of the player's mission is to enter the system in a specially modified police ship, contact the remaining Solician forces and help them to build and deliver a Neutron Bomb – the only weapon powerful enough to destroy the Egron's beam projector.

The Solicians have taken refuge in a series of interconnecting tunnels which honeycomb the interiors of several planets and moons. Once contacted, the Solicians outline the items required for the construction of the device, and the player is sent on an intergalactic scavenger hunt.

The basic scenario outlined above only begins to scratch the surface of the mission, and your ship has to be constantly refuelled and rearmed in



Icarus as seen from space, with the star, Solice, in the background. The exterior viewpoint can be shifted around and zoomed in and out to create some spectacular scenes. The red craft nearby is a marauding pirate vessel.

An Egron mechanical whale glides serenely through the upper atmosphere of the red gas giant Millway. Sampled whale-song plays whenever one of these beasts approaches the Icarus, and they move with some gorgeous animation. Static pictures do little justice . . .

arglider II

order to ensure progress. Many of the items required are only obtained through bartering, which in turn depends upon the collection of further materials, and so on.

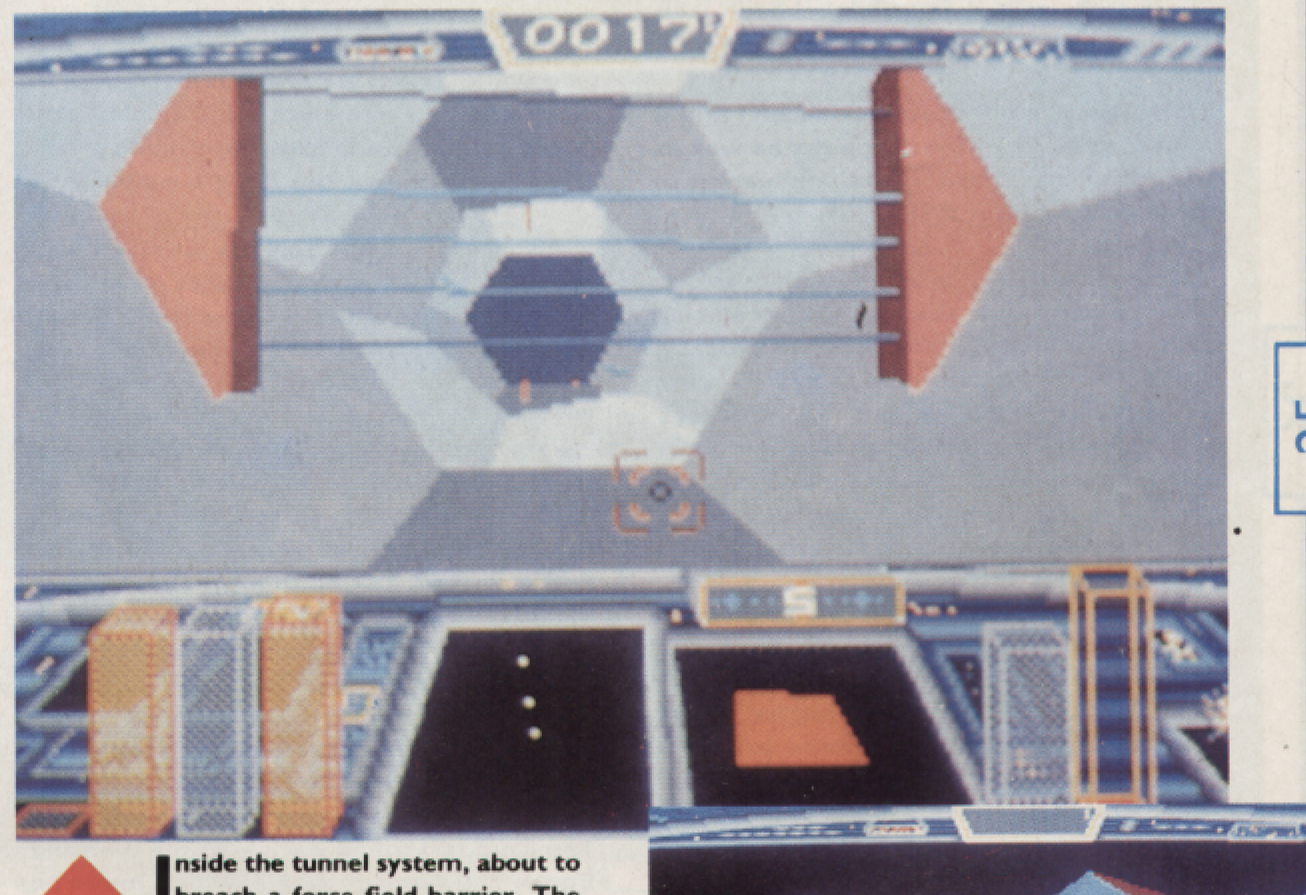
Locating and collecting the necessary items for construction of the bomb shouldn't prove too difficult once the system has been explored and mapped. However, the full intricacies of the mission will take longer to master and completing it is a more than worthy challenge. It is reckoned by the Argonaut team that it takes a seasoned pilot around three hours to complete the mission from start to finish. A game save option is included, which should prove vital for success.

ARGONAUT SOFTWARE



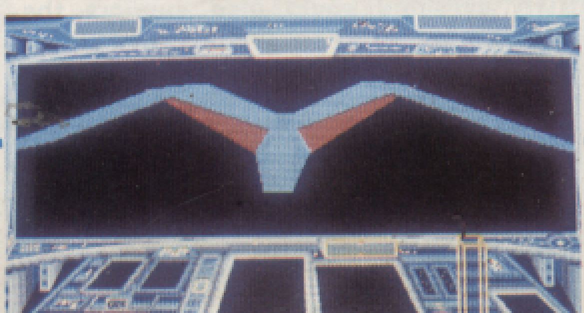
Jez Sans began computing with a TRS80, way back in 1978. He rapidly worked his way through a variety of 8-bit machines, and later worked on conversion problems on Firebird's 64 version of Elite. Tony Rainbird was so pleased with his work at this time that he asked Jez to produce a game – any game, and he would publish it.

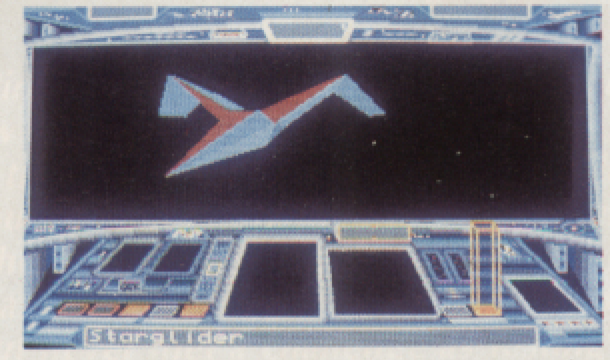
"I was very interested in the mathematics of creating 3D imagery, and began work on a vector graphic routine using a Sinclair QL. I found the QL unsuitable for the type of things I wanted to do, and so hired an Apple Mac to work on. A few months later the Atari ST appeared and I saw it as an ideal machine for my applications." Thus began the work on Starglider. It was an immense success.



Inside the tunnel system, about to breach a force field barrier. The next section along constantly rotates, which can be extremely disorienting at times.

The 'Painting With Rolf' option available from the title screen allows all the 3D shapes included in the game to be brought up on screen, manipulated in three dimensions and doodled with. The first picture is the Starglider ship which has been rotated and is viewed from behind . . .



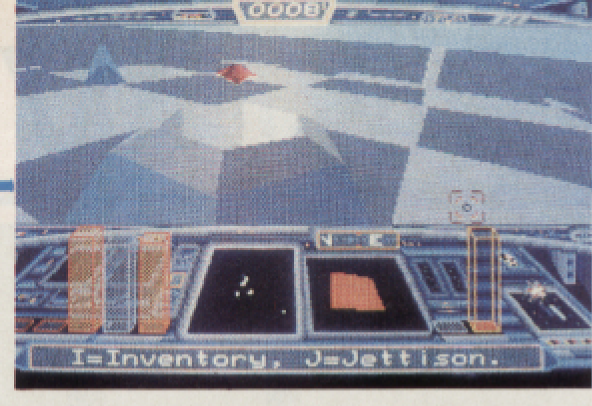


Starglider shrunk down and moved to the left.

Starglider

And finally drawn with in a similar fashion to the option in the arcade coin-op I, Robot. Discovered by mistake when the drawing routine failed to clear the screen after updating it, the Argonauts decided to make a feature of it. Rolf also comes in handy for the game itself, allowing some of the necessary objects to be recognised beforehand.

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REVIEW

"Starglider made enough money to fund Argonaut Software which now number ten strong, and is in the process of recruiting new blood. But as far as I'm concerned, **Starglider** wasn't finished. I really wanted to continue with it, refining the routines and adding extra things; but suddenly Rainbird wanted the game for release, so I had to stop.

"I'm much more satisfied with **Starglider II**, though. We've optimised the routines and I believe it's as fast, if not faster than **Starglider**. And it's filled-in.

"**Starglider II** has had over five man-years lavished on it, and the development costs, including new equipment and premises means that even if **Starglider II** sells well, we probably still won't recoup all our expenses.

"My reasons for doing **Starglider I** and **II** were to implement the 3D maths as well as possible; to get it to do what you want it to do. And to make a fast, exciting and playable game.

"**Starglider II** was definitely a team effort: there's a lot of code sharing, and we all help each other out in the development process.

"It's an ongoing situation though: we sell the games to publishers, but the technology remains ours. In effect, producing **Starglider** was the development work for **Starglider II**, and producing **Starglider II** the development work for our next project, and so on."

What is their latest project?

"At the moment we're working on two, the first of which is **Hawk** for Electronic Arts, which has been in development more or less since we finished **Starglider**. **Hawk** features an enormous landscape complete with fractal-generated mountains over which the player flies a sophisticated aircraft. EA wanted it ready in September, but we'll be lucky to have it completed this year. We don't want to stop until we have the best thing around – it already is, but we want to make it even better.

"At the moment it contains the most detailed 3D images ever seen on a home computer. There are tons of enemy craft: helicopters, tanks, F18's, F19's and a few imaginary Stealth planes. Each vehicle has up to 30 facets and there are often more than one craft on-screen at a time. When it's really busy, you can have far more than 100 polygons on-screen and the frame rate is still pretty rapid. We've actually got **Hawk** to run 20% faster than **Starglider II**."

Argonaut also have the 16-bit versions of **Afterburner** for Electric Dreams, for which they have produced sophisticated sprite handling routines.

"We now have a sprite engine which can manipulate hand-drawn sprites at high speed, moving them, reducing and expanding them at will. We are currently working on the ST version which is coming along extremely well. The Amiga version could well be identical to the arcade version; we believe it's the closest conversion to date".

"The quality of other conversions have been generally poor. The best on so far has been **Buggy Boy**, and even that could have been better. We do watch the opposition, but simply to ensure that we remain original".

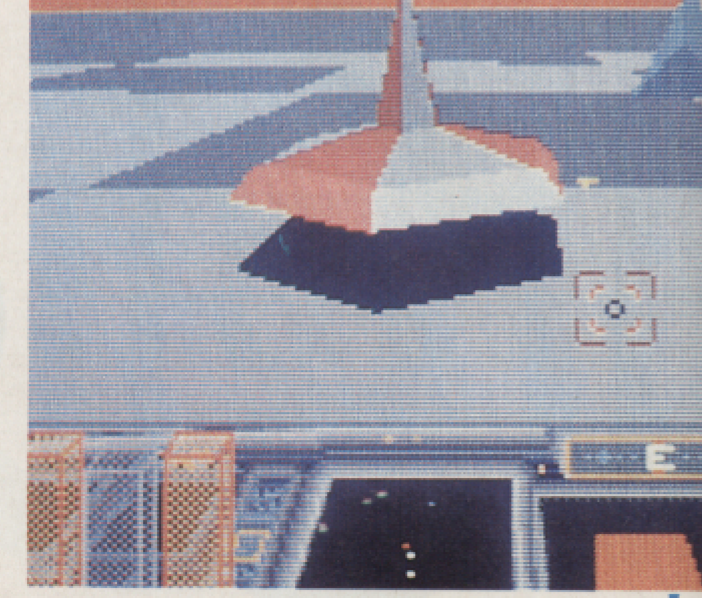
So what of the future?

"We can now use our sprite engine in conjunction with the 3D graphics routines to create detailed 3D games. We can generate the solid, 3D shapes and sweeten them by having sprite generated explosions, exhaust fumes, insignia and so on.

"We are watching CDI closely, but ultimately, we would like to move into coin-op game production. We are also interested in converting our games to the consoles, specifically the Nintendo and PC Engine. This isn't definite – but it's a possibility."

A The Solician system and its inhabitants are depicted in beautiful detail. The 3D is very fast, very smooth and entirely believable. In fact, rather than being a vehicle for the gameplay, it's almost the reverse: gameplay really takes a back seat to the visuals. It's all too easy to spend the first few hours – even days – just flying around, taking in all the sights and sounds which Starglider II has to offer. Indeed the imagery is often quite stunning. There's a huge array of constructions, vehicles and objects to be discovered, from simple buildings to spinning towers, asteroids, pirate ships – dead ringers for the twin pod cloud cars from The Empire Strikes Back – to the amazing Egron mechanical whale which must be seen to be appreciated. The gameplay is simpler than first appears, or is insinuated by the manual (which, rather than being an extravagant and superfluous addition to the package, proves a humorous and informative read, acting as an obscure instruction manual/hint sheet). The large amount of sampled sound effects also act as a prime factor to the game's atmosphere, adding to the whole experience. But whatever the shortcomings of its individual elements, the game as a whole is an extremely worthy purchase.

PRICE:	£24.95
RELEASE DATE:	Out Now
GRAPHICS	90%
SOUND	95%
PLAYABILITY	86%
VALUE	84%
OVERALL	**89%**



Blasting an Egron Spire Building sees it spin and rise into the air, only to land again some distance away. The sequence is accomplished by some strange sampled sound effects on the Amiga.

ST There's little to separate the ST and Amiga versions graphically. The ST Starglider II is slightly slower and rather less smooth, but only the closest examination reveals any serious differences. Its major fault, though, lies with the sound. The atmosphere, so ably generated by the Amiga's sampled sound effects, is unfortunately lacking here. The decision to avoid the samples effects was taken by the Argonaut team, who said it would cause the game to run 20% slower if they were included. This leaves the ST's sound chip to cope as best it can, and as a result the effects are quite harsh, with little to commend them. This deficiency means that Starglider II is only very good instead of great.

PRICE:	£24.95
RELEASE DATE:	Out Now
GRAPHICS	90%
SOUND	48%
PLAYABILITY	85%
VALUE	85%
OVERALL	**85%**



The PC version of Starglider II is all set for a January release, and is also being programmed by the Argonaut team. By all accounts, progress is good and they hope to support Tandy, EGA, CGA and VGA graphics cards (VGA versions could also support the powerful MVGA which would prove better than the Amiga and ST versions).

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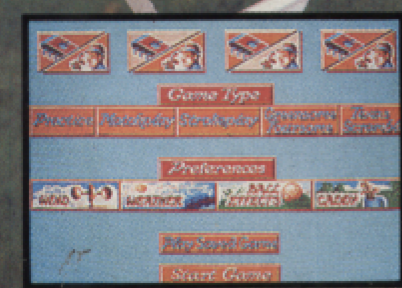


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Screen shots from Atari ST version.

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Host

Strategy and action are combined in Infogrames' Hostages, yet another game that calls for a mix of arcade and strategy skills. It's edge-of-the-seat thrills all the way when you take control of a team of six crack commandos – as Graeme Kidd discovered in his attempts to rescue hostages after a terrorist attack...

A mini-movie sets the scene for Hostages: a car screeches to a halt outside an embassy and masked gunmen run into the building. A ticker-tape readout announces that terrorists have taken hostages and issued an ultimatum – the government isn't going to concede. The Special Intervention Group of the State Police Force is summoned, arriving in a van with sirens blaring.

Step forward Captain Cavendish, commander of the six-man squad of highly-trained commandos. Unless your men rescue the hostages before the terrorists' deadline expires, they will all be killed and another blow will have been struck against democracy and freedom...

Darkness falls. A cool head and razor-sharp reactions are called for if the mission is to succeed. The first stage of the operation involves stationing marksmen around the embassy – if the snipers can get into position, they can cover the building, and with luck, despatch a few terrorists foolish enough to show themselves against a lighted window.

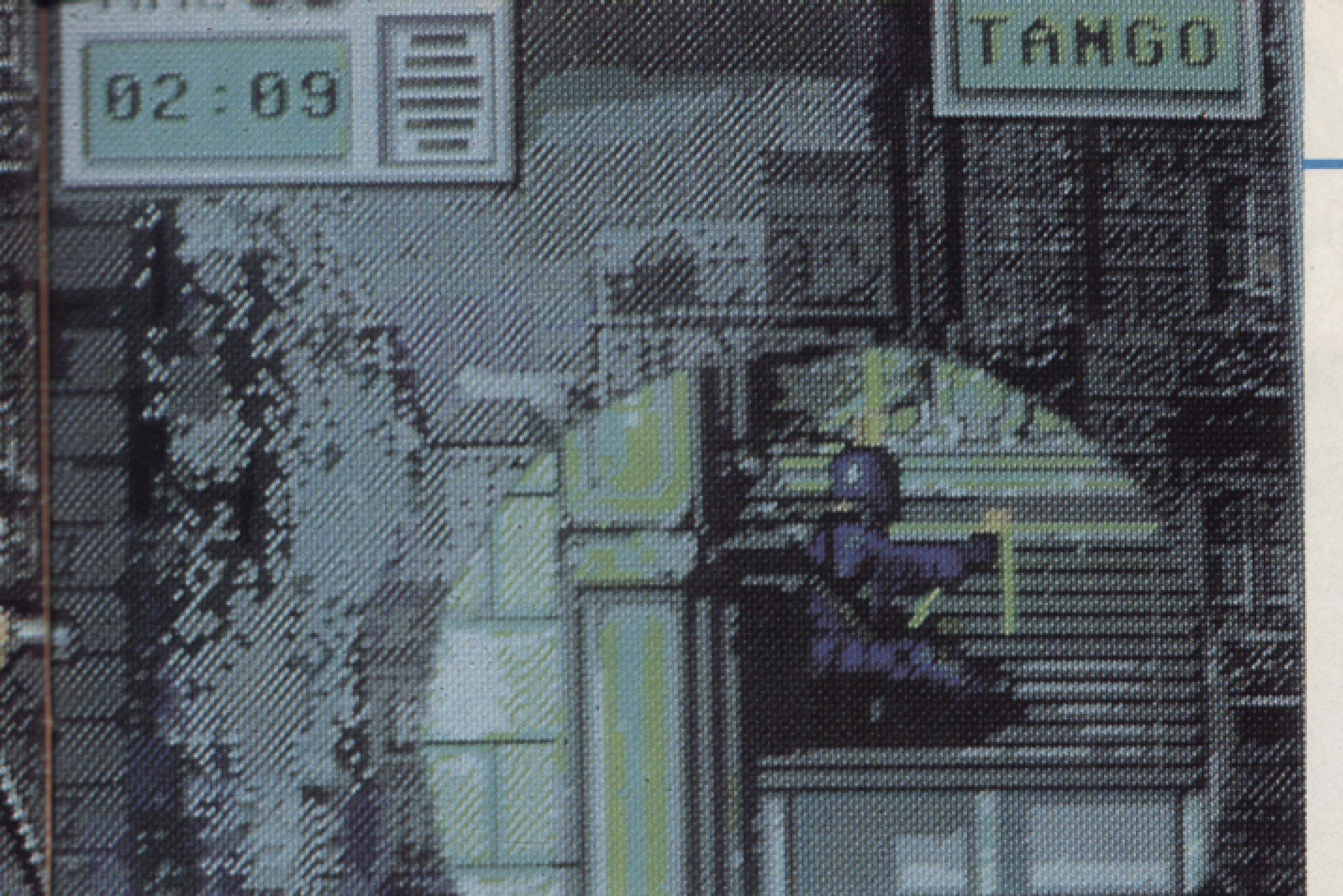
Delta, Echo and Mike, your three marksmen, are lurking in the shadows, ready to make a run for one of the vantage points you've selected. You take direct control of a marksman, but the terrorists have anticipated your move – they've rigged up searchlights and play them over the darkened streets. The marksman runs, jumps, rolls, crawls, ducks into doorways and vaults over fences to avoid the moving pools of light. Allow him to be framed in the beam of a searchlight and the terrorists open fire – a few hits, and your man is fit only for the morgue.

Providing at least one marksman is put into position, the second phase of the game begins – after another short movie sequence which shows a helicopter flying against the dark cityscape. Hovering above the embassy roof, the chopper unloads the other three members of your team, and it's time to storm the embassy to clear its three floors of terrorists and rescue the innocent...

Select a man, move him around the rooftop to an appropriate point and let



The marksmen await your command – any moment now, one of them will be making a run for the vantage points you have selected.



A pulsing beat accompanies the action as you cautiously explore the corridors and rooms of the embassy which has become a prison for the innocent hostages. The rules of hostage-rescuing are simple: watch your back, and shoot anything in green camo gear that moves, before it shoots you.

Gradually, with experience, the strategic elements of the game become apparent and you can devote a little time to keeping an eye on the read-outs. Introduce a second or even a third commando into the building and start working as a team; make the most of your snipers – they can be used to reduce the odds if you trust yourself enough to leave the floor of the embassy and take a few shots at terrorists in the window. As the count-down gets low, there's no point in pussyfooting around – throw caution to the winds and GO FOR IT!

ages

A marksman looks through his nighsight as a commando from the roof team gets ready to absail down the embassy wall.

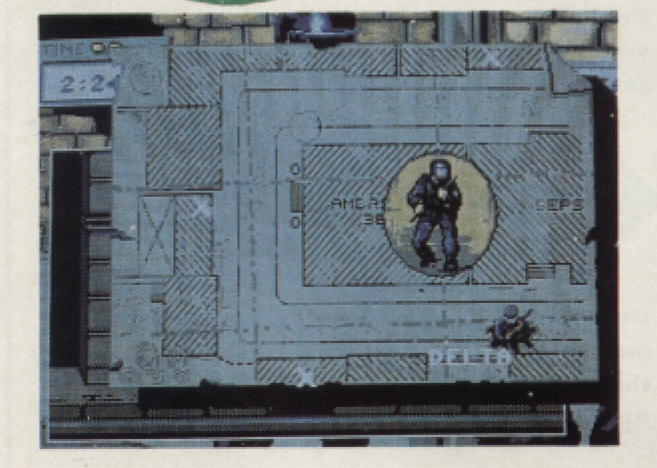
SHORTENING THE ODDS AGAINST THE TERRORISTS

Practice your anti-terrorist skills! The number of terrorists and hostages increases with the skill of the commander and the difficulty of the mission – and the time limit gets shorter and the terrorists meaner, too...

Try to get all three in position. Don't be

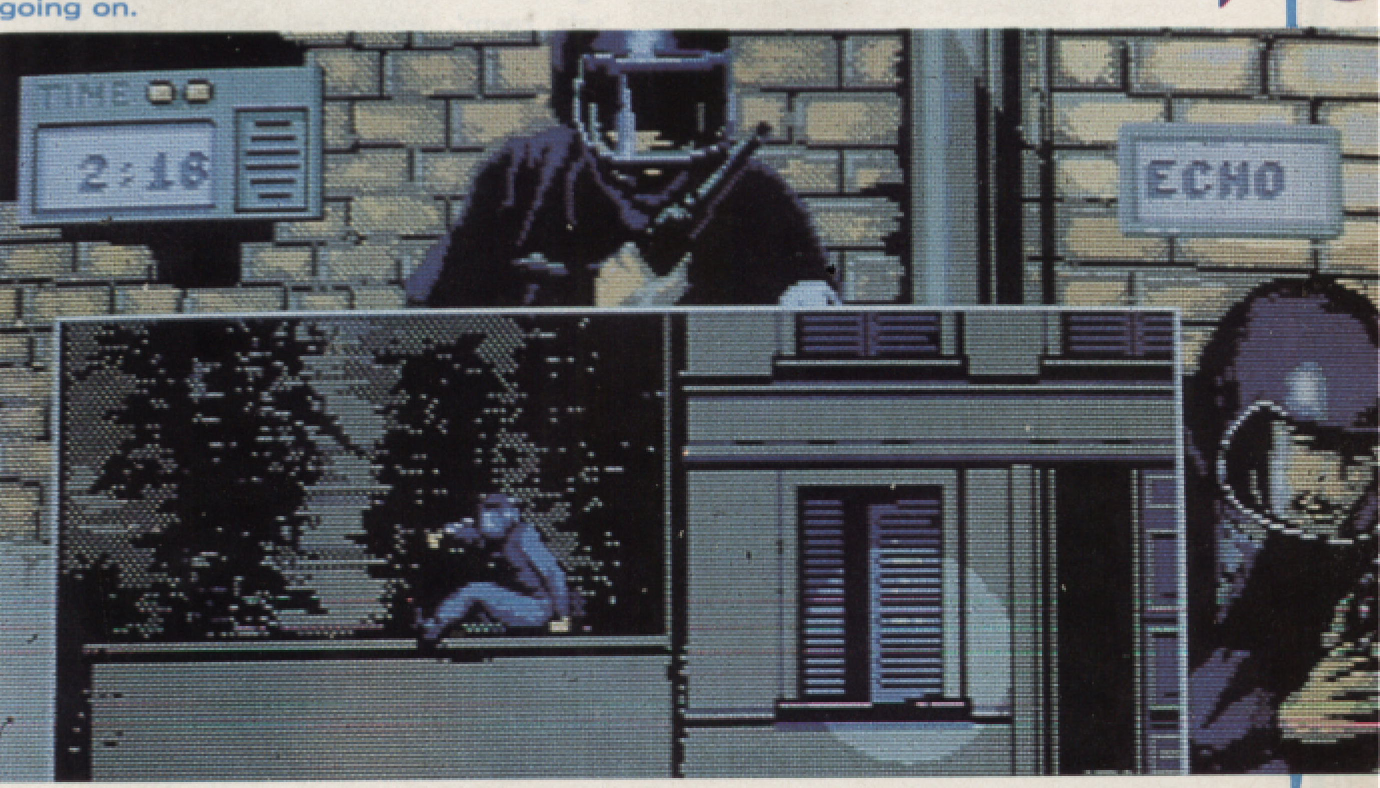
Marksman ECHO vaults over a wall into the street as a searchlight plays randomly over the buildings. Your task is to guide him safely to cover.

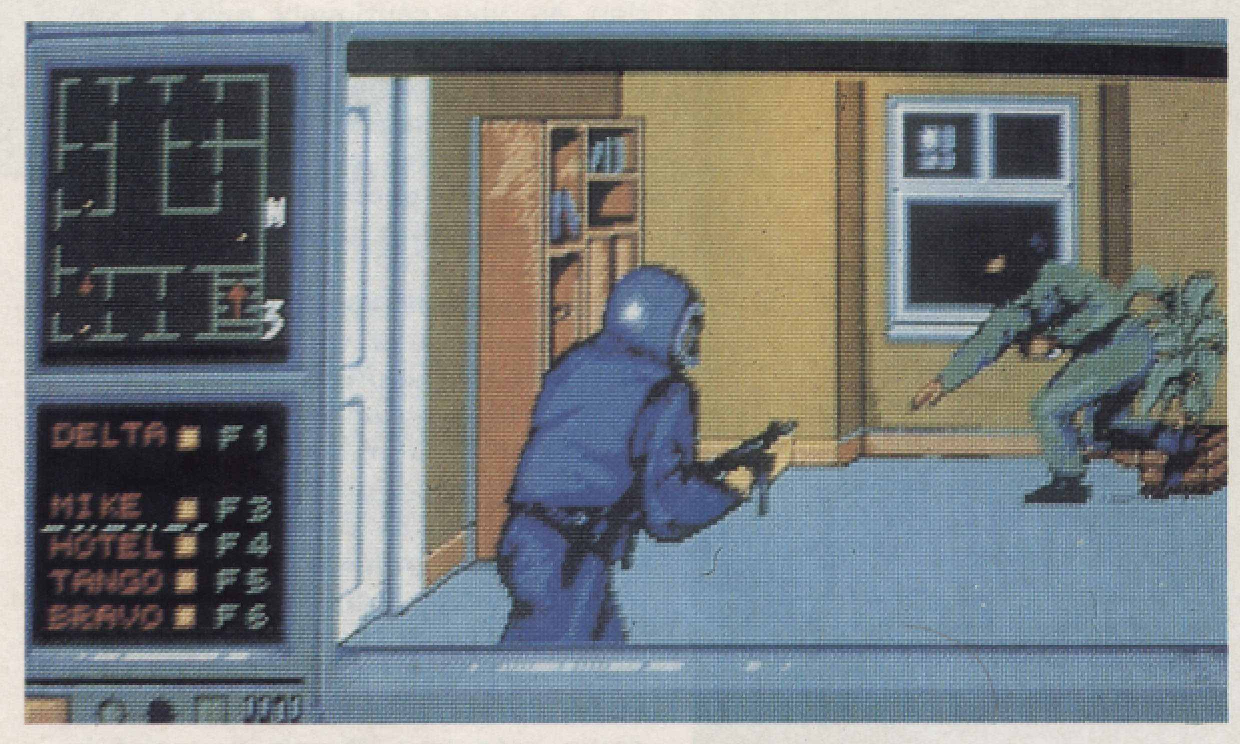
30



The master plan of the vicinity – three crosses mark the three places where the snipers will be able to cover an entire wall of the embassy. DELTA is under your command and ready to make a break for it...

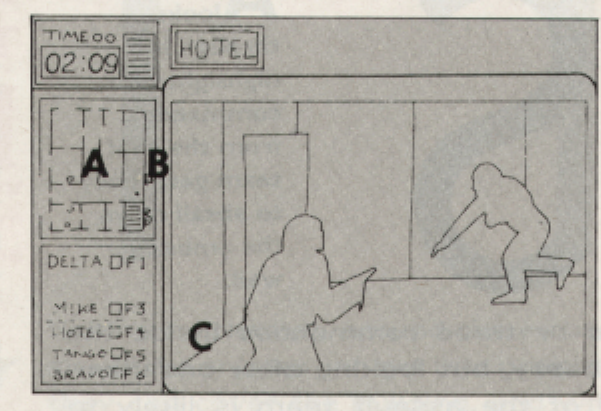
the absailing begin! Careful timing is called for if the commando is to slide down the rope and get the right momentum to propel him, boots first, through a window. You can take one, two or three commandos inside the embassy, but looking after one member of the assault team is likely to prove more than enough until you've thoroughly got the hang of what's going on.





Roof-commando HOTEL has gained access to the third floor of the embassy and found a terrorist. The main screen shows the view as HOTEL is about to start shooting – the terrorist is going for a pistol on the floor. Press fire and move left and right while holding the fire button down if you want to spray machine gun fire around the room... Panels on the left give useful game information – see annotated detail.

A The small red arrow represents your commando, with the arrow head indicating the direction he is facing. If you 'bump into' a hostage, he will follow you like Barky the faithful dog – a white dot appears on the tail of your commando's red arrow.



B Gaps in the outside wall are windows, gaps in internal walls are doors. The room at the top right with one door and no windows is the 'safe room', where you should lead the hostages as you rescue them – they will stay there. Be careful, though – terrorists will try to recapture hostages, and once a terrorist has entered the safe room, hostages that have not been seized by the bad guys tend to go walkabout.

C On higher levels of difficulty, you have to enter a room to discover whether a terrorist is lurking inside... the map doesn't give everything away.

ST Infogrames have been building up quite a reputation for slick graphics and on-screen presentation with their 16-bit products. Like Captain Blood and Stir Crazy, their last two releases, Hostages is a well-polished program. Gameplay, too, is involved and compelling – the insistent throbbing soundtrack complements the graphics and keeps up the pressure as you work against the deadline to achieve the mission objectives. The training mission, without hostages to worry about, allows you to get into the game quite quickly and once you've mastered the basic control techniques the real playing can begin. With three skill levels and four complexities of mission to get to grips with, Hostages should prove a satisfying challenge for quite some time...

PRICE: £24.95
RELEASE DATE: September

GRAPHICS	84%
SOUND	83%
PLAYABILITY	81%
VALUE	72%

OVERALL 81%



Hostages should be available by the time you read this – at present Infogrames are putting the finishing touches to this version, converting the French text into English in the process. So, all going well, you can expect to see an update and ratings in the next issue...



Obviously the PC version won't be as graphically accomplished as its ST or Amiga counterparts, and sound will certainly be on the weak side. But aesthetics aside, the gameplay will be virtually identical, and thus just as captivating. Stay tuned for further details...

tempted to start blasting away at figures in the embassy windows until you've got at least one man inside – you can't tell whether a silhouette is a hostage or a terrorist.

When trying to put the snipers into position, don't forget the forward roll – it gets you through searchlight beams quickest of all.

Suicide is sometimes worth considering – you don't get to the second stage of the game unless you get at least one sniper in position. If two snipers are dead, sacrifice the third and try over...

Before sending the first man from the roof, take him to a side of the embassy covered by a sniper and use the sniper to check for an empty window. Then send your man in through that window double-quick.

As soon as you've got a man inside the building, look at the floor plan and identify any windows that have terrorists behind them. Then transfer control to your sniper(s) and take out as many terrorists as you can. Take the man inside the embassy to each floor in turn, switching back to the sniper(s) once windows occupied by terrorists have been identified.

Get a couple of men inside the building. Station one in the safe room, and keep an eye on the status panel light – when it flashes, it means a terrorist is trying to recapture hostages that you have led to safety. Transfer control to the commando in the safe room the moment his status light winks and you might be able to keep the hostages safe.

When entering a room that contains a terrorist, try and do so when the terrorist is directly opposite the door. Barge in, wait a nanosecond so you can check that he is not using a hostage as a human shield, and THEN start firing. Charging into a room with machine gun blazing might be safe for you, but innocent people might die...

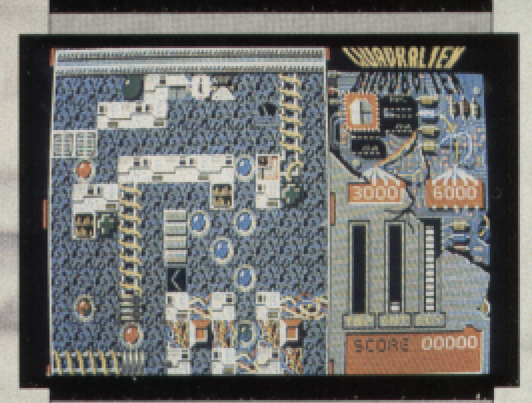
Sometimes the terrorists come looking for you. If you can get into a room with only one door, place your back against the wall opposite the door, put your finger on the trigger and wait for them to arrive.

You can only lead one hostage to safety at a time. Clear the third floor of terrorists if you can and stash all the hostages in the safe room before moving down a floor.

The games they said couldn't be written

QUADRALIEN





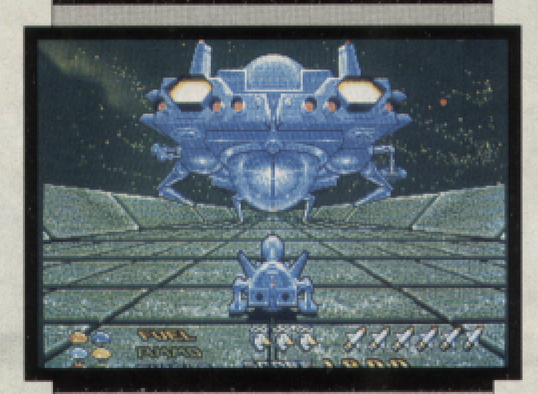
ST Screen Shot

You are entering Jupiterspace. Your destination, Astra, the vast cybernetic nuclear-fission complex they orbited mid-21st century. Something strange has happened there. Astra has sealed itself off from the outside world, the control mechanisms won't respond, the temperatures rising. Meltdown is nigh. But it's worse than that, for in the very heart of the reactor itself, the sinister QUADRALIEN forces have established their foothold in our solar-system. You have just six droids to sort it out.
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Amiga Screen Shot

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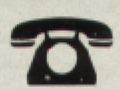
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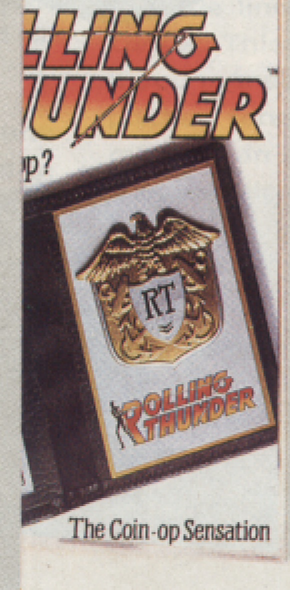
you'll be falling over yourself to get the rest

sound and unmatched playability of our games in an effort to get the rest...

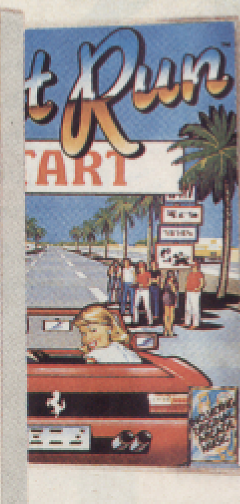




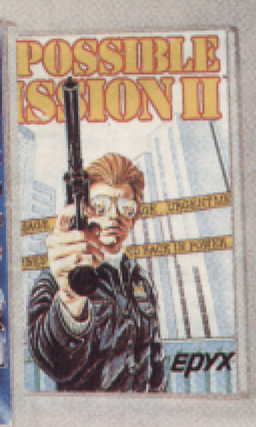












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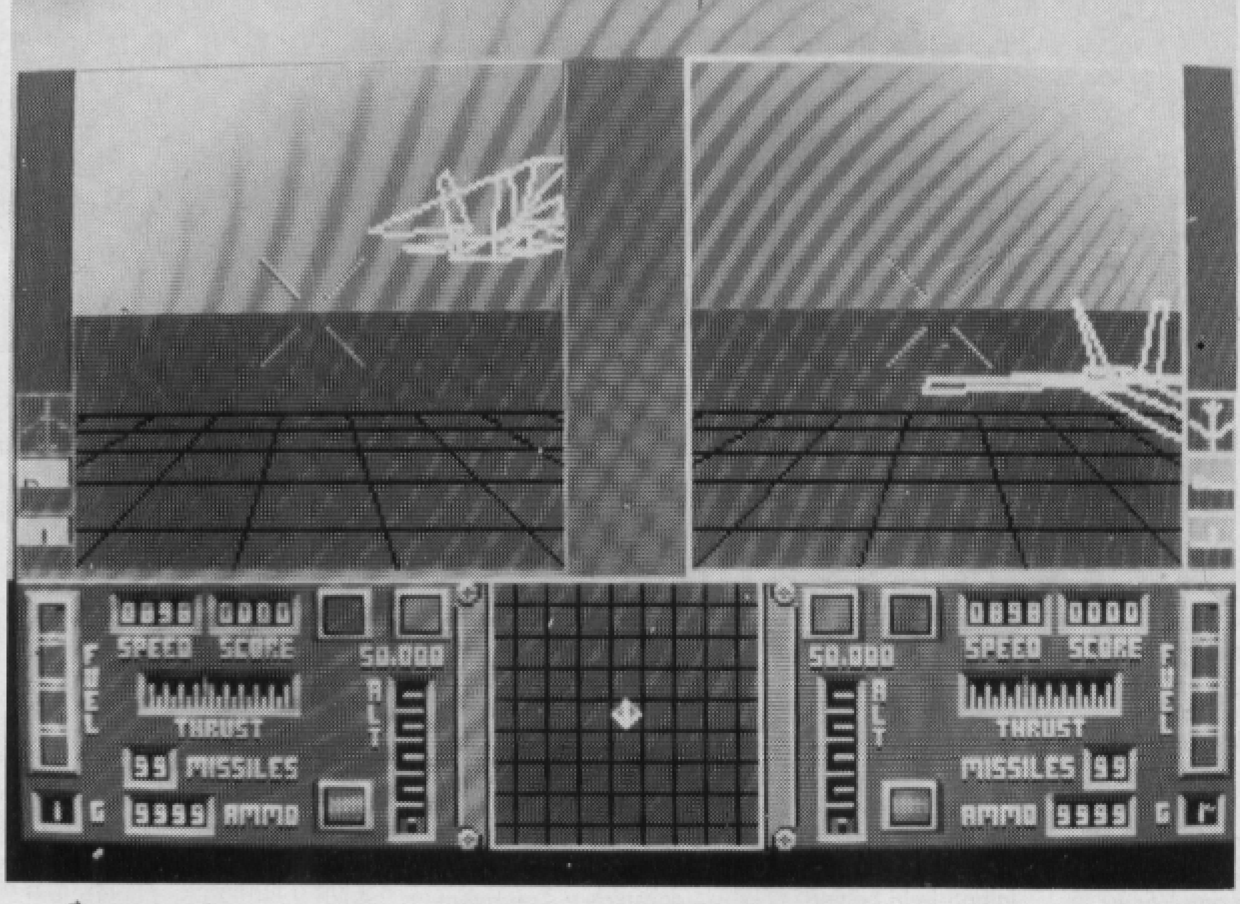
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Skychas

High-flying Gary Whitta puts Image Works new flight cum combat simulator through its paces. There's plenty of options including two player head-to-head. But does Skychase earn its wings?



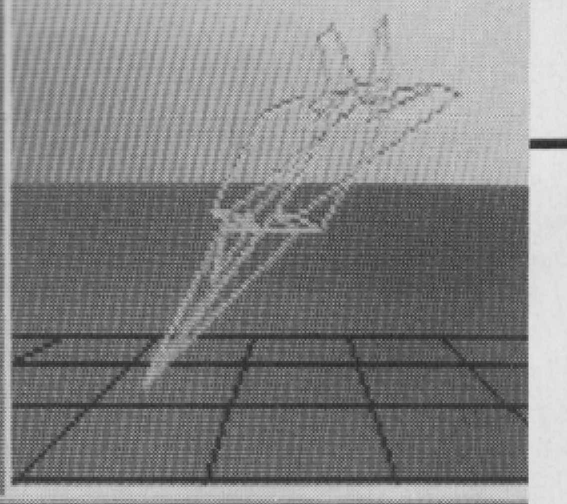
The computer-controlled fly-by sequence performed before each round of combat. It looks good, but performs no valid function. Combat is greatly improved by disabling this sequence so that you restart from where you died.

The relatively small Californian village of Fightertown is the unlikely home of the legendary Fighter Weapons School, otherwise known as 'Top Gun', where the top one percent of the US Navy's fighter pilots are trained to perfection. It's also the setting for Mirrorsoft's first 16-bit release on their Image Works label. Skychase is a flight simulation cum shoot 'em-up action game that puts either one or two players through the rigorous paces of being trained for real combat.

Of course it doesn't put you through the torturous written examinations that real pilots have to sit through. Instead it puts you straight into the cockpit of a modern jet fighter to dc battle against either a computer 'drone' opponent or a friend in a series of dogfights, or 'hope' as the real pilots call them.

To enable two players to fight simultaneously, the screen display has been split vertically into two identical but independent cockpit screens. Player One uses the lefthand screen while Player Two (or the computer if one-player mode has been selected) views the game world from the screen on the right.

Before combat begins, the two fighter planes zoom past each other at high speed in a computer-controlled flyby sequence. Control is then handed over to the players and combat can begin in earnest. Rather than produce an accu-



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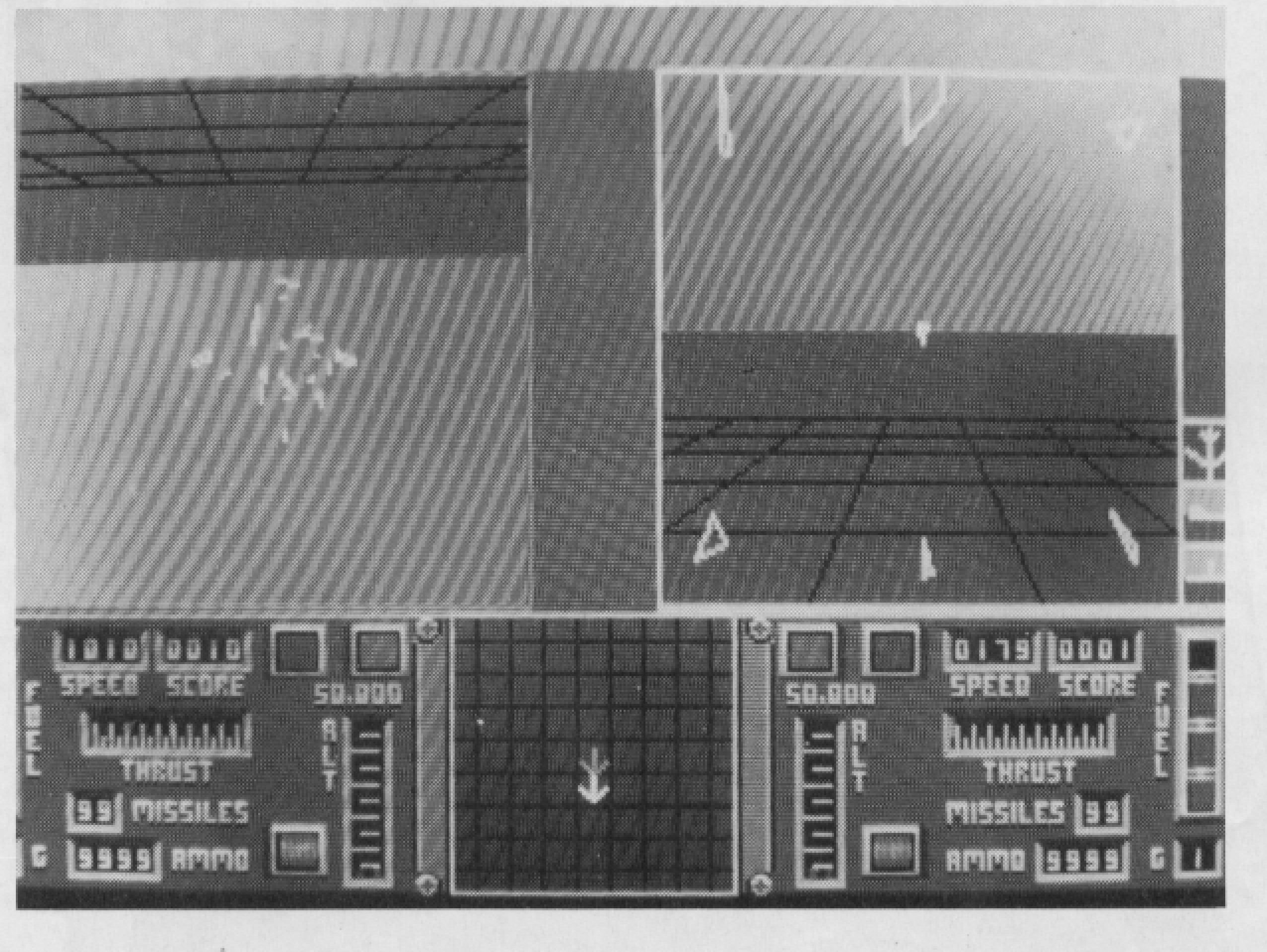
An F-14 Tomcat – one of the seven craft available. Each fighter has its own characteristics, eg: maximum speed and speed of turn. Gary Whitta reckons the Paper Plane is your best bet for a good all-round jet.

rate simulation of flying a fighter plane where dials and guages abound as in **Flight Simulator II** or **Jet**, American programming team Maxis have opted for a more simplistic approach, so flying is just a matter of up-down-left-right controls, all performed with the joystick. The only keyboard control is the one used to increase and decrease thrust.

Defeating your enemy is not simply a matter of destroying him once. Instead, points are accumulated every time a dogfight is won. When either one of the player's fuel supplies is exhausted, the game ends. The player with the highest number of kills, and subsequently the most points, is declared the winner. Winning a dogfight round is achieved by shooting down your opponent using either your cannons or missiles. Cannons are operated by holding down the fire button, whereby a stream of machine gun bullets are fired. Alternatively, you can nail your opponent (or your opponent can nail you) by locking on a missile and firing. If you're in acceptable range, a targetting box appears which must then be lined up with your on-screen cursor. This takes a few seconds, and if you manage to do this, a steady high pitched tone is sounded, whereupon a missile can be fired. Strangely enough, this missile comes in the shape of the ubiquitous red and white chequered Amiga ball!

A novel aspect of **SkyChase** is the way in which it is practically a jet-combat construction set in that it's possible to alter just about every variable in the game. There is a choice of seven planes for each player to try out ranging from the F-14, F-16 and F-18 to the most up-to-date Soviet MiGs, and even a paper plane! It's possible to change the quantity of weaponry each plane carries, as well as their effectiveness in combat. A host of other features, such as blanking out the drone's screen in one player mode, so you can't see what he sees and the option to take out the CPU controlled flyby sequence, have also been included.

Both planes explode into vector graphic fragments after a typically tense bout of high speed aerial combat.

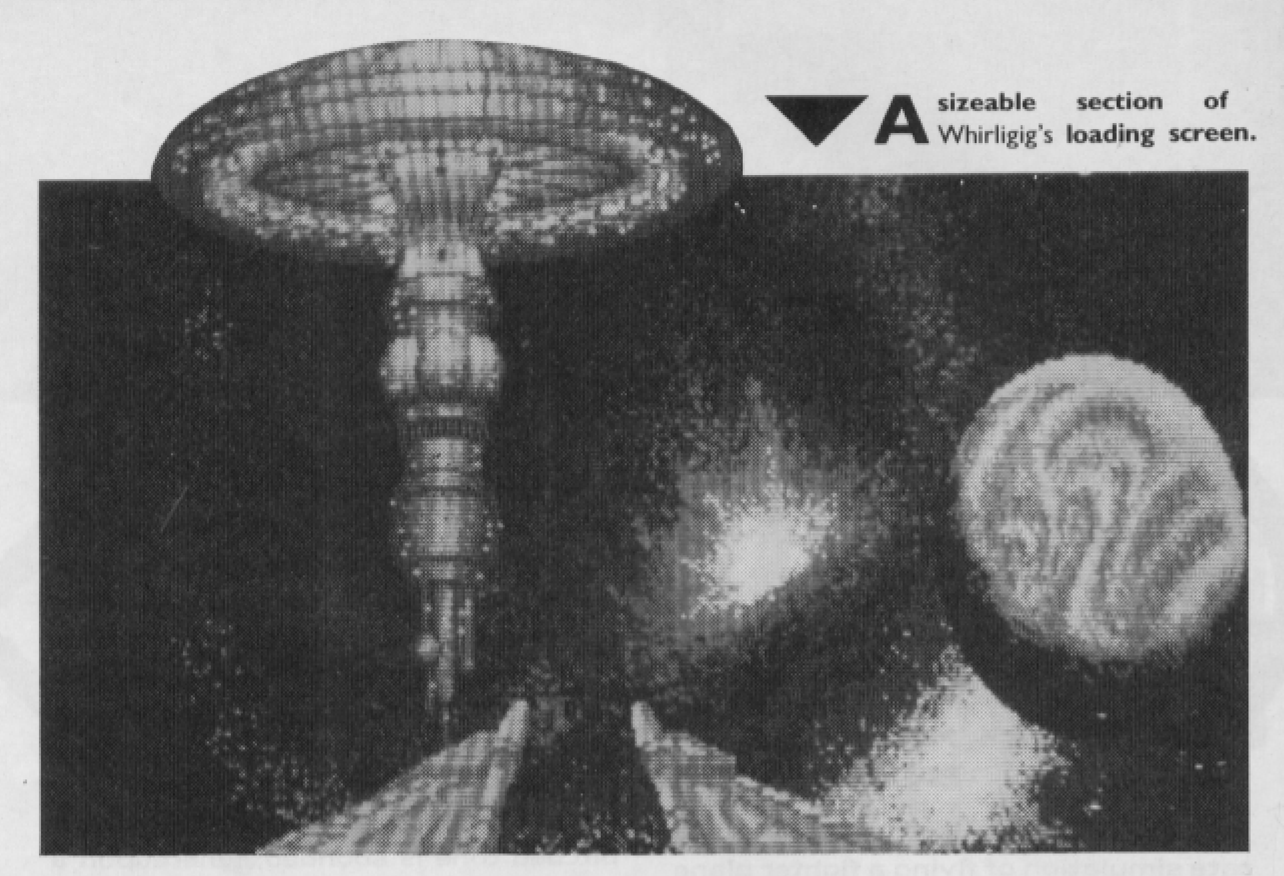


A Image Works have a few minor bugs to iron out, but this version is still well on course for its intended September release date. There won't be any horrendous differences, as the conversion was carried out by Maxis, the team behind the Amiga original. Update next month . . .

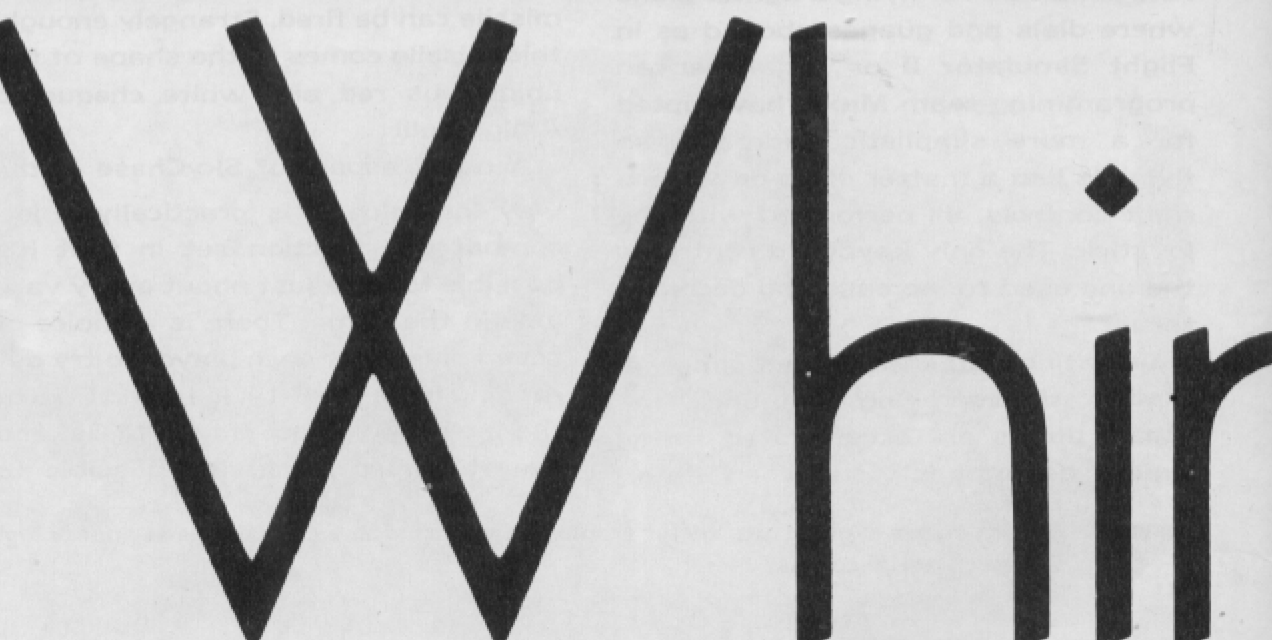
ST Skychase is by no means the fully-fledged flight simulation that it claims to be. The controls have been over-simplified, and as a result, the game veers too far to the arcade side to attract simulation fans. Also over-simplistic is the game's aesthetics. In the days of such an awesome computer as the Amiga, owners expect slightly more than blue-green flat landscapes with just a wire-frame grid for scenery. Sound is not quite as impressive as it could have been, and even leans on being dreary and depressing at times, due to the uninteresting (and ultimately unrealistic) engine sounds. Also the theme tune is not suited to the game at all. A bit of high-speed rock would have been much more acceptable than the psuedo-classical tunette that currently adorns the title screen. However, Skychase succeeds in providing a good opening for people who are thinking about moving away from shoot 'em ups to dabble in flight simulations. It's not too tough to put off first-timers, and so could serve ideally in introducting people to computer flight. It's also quite useful for brushing up on combat techniques and maneouvering, and some of the tricks that Skychase taught me later went on to be lifesavers in Interceptor! As a game however, it only really warrants its price tag if you have a friend or relative (or an Ad Manager) to play it with. The computer player lacks any real intelligence, even on the hardest level, and so playing Skychase in solitude is likely to end up being a rather mundane affair.

PRICE:	£19.99
RELEASE DATE:	Out Now
GRAPHICS	51%
SOUND	47%
PLAYABILITY	69%
VALUE	56%

OVERALL 66%



A sizeable section of Whirligig's **loading screen.**



With four billion levels to explore, Whirligig must be one of the largest games yet to appear on 16-bit machines. Gary Whitta jumps into hyperspace and finds to his surprise that it's not quite all it's cracked up to be.

Over the past few months, Firebird and Rainbird have been releasing games designed to push the Atari ST and Amiga just that bit further than the hordes of shoot 'em ups currently infesting the software shelves.

Carrier Command, **Starglider II** and **Virus** are three good examples. Now we have **Whirligig**, the first 16-bit product to come from 8-bit innovator Mike Singleton. Any game that boasts a staggering four billion levels and more than 100 billion aliens is likely to attract a lot of attention, and sure enough **Whirligig** has done that.

Cast as a courageous starfighter pilot of the future, you are set the surreal quest of travelling around a huge universe (the Whirligig) to collect five perfect solids – cube, dodecahedron, and so on.

To describe the way in which **Whirligig** works is not easy. It's similar to **Virus** insofar as you control the ship using the mouse with controls for pitch, yaw, roll and thrust. Anyone who's played **Virus** before will know that this isn't the easiest control method to get used to. An awful lot of screaming about the universe completely out of control will be endured before you learn how to master your ship. Here, however, the similarity with **Virus** ends. Where **Virus** was a strategic shoot 'em up, **Whirligig** is more of an arcade adventure.

At the outset of the game, you find yourself in Eigenspace (Level One). A quick push on the stick thrusts your ship forward through space, which scrolls in all directions while you stay central. Each Eigenspace is littered with all manner of objects, both friendly and not-so-friendly. Depots are the most useful as flying closely past one replenishes your ship's supplies, fuel, missiles or chaff. There are three types of depot, one for each commodity.

Missiles are launched by pressing the left mouse button and are used to destroy aliens and other such threats to mission completion. Once fired a missile locks on to and destroys the nearest object on the screen. Trigger maniacs must beware, though. Firing a missile while there's nothing else on the screen causes it to lock on to your ship and destroy you!

Chaff is a more defensive alternative. Although its speed and manoeuvrability is much greater, and its targetting system is far more accurate, chaff operates on a priority system. This means it always looks for the greatest threat to your ship and destroys it before anything else.

Fuel is probably the most important commodity on board your ship. When it runs out you lose control of the ship, which results in you invariably crashing.

Travelling from Eigenspace to Eigenspace is achieved by passing through portals known as Stargates which resemble spinning wheels. By passing slowly through the gates you can travel to one of the other 3,999,999,999 Eigenspaces.

The five perfect solids are each contained in special Eigenspaces called



▲ Your ship slips through a Stargate, which then sucks in the Eigenspace behind.

igig

Perfectspaces. When you come across one, either by accident or due to careful planning, you can collect the solid by flying within its 'attractor field' which places it in tow. Drag it back through a Stargate and you've got it. Capture all five and you've won the game.

A Whirligig is one of those games that promises the earth but fails to deliver. Unlike Virus, and indeed similar games, Whirligig has well defined graphics but cannot animate them smoothly enough to give any impression of speed or exhilaration while in flight. There's a stirring tune played throughout, although it doesn't seem suited to this style of game, and it does tend to irritate a little too often. Fortunately, you can turn it off, leaving the weak spot effects, which, like the music, fail to generate a suitable atmosphere. And atmosphere is something Whirligig so desperately needs. It's an unfortunate piece of software where gameplay is concerned, in that it successfully falls between two stools. There are no real problems to solve, and the shoot 'em up action is far from enthralling, being slow and at worst, fiddly. Which means that all there's left to do is explore the four billion samey levels. Not much fun. It's a shame Whirligig has turned out this way, when it could so easily have been something a bit special had it a clear direction. It just goes to show: bigger doesn't necessarily mean better.

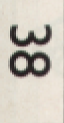
PRICE:	£19.99
RELEASE DATE:	Out Now
GRAPHICS	53%
SOUND	53%
PLAYABILITY	59%
VALUE	40%

OVERALL 51%

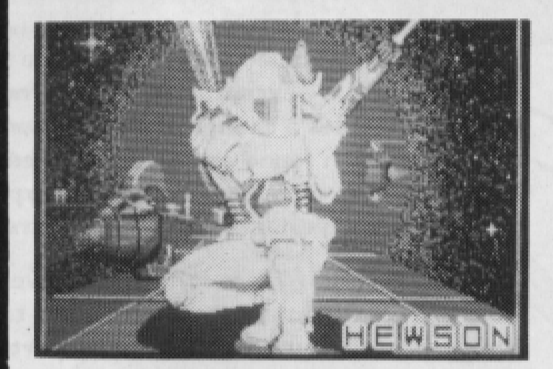
ST This version is vitually identical to its Amiga counterpart, apart from the tune, which is still unsuitable but at least it *sounds* reasonable. Gameplay is exactly the same, and subsequently so are the faults.

PRICE:	£19.99
RELEASE DATE:	Our Now
GRAPHICS	53%
SOUND	53%
PLAYABILITY	59%
VALUE	40%

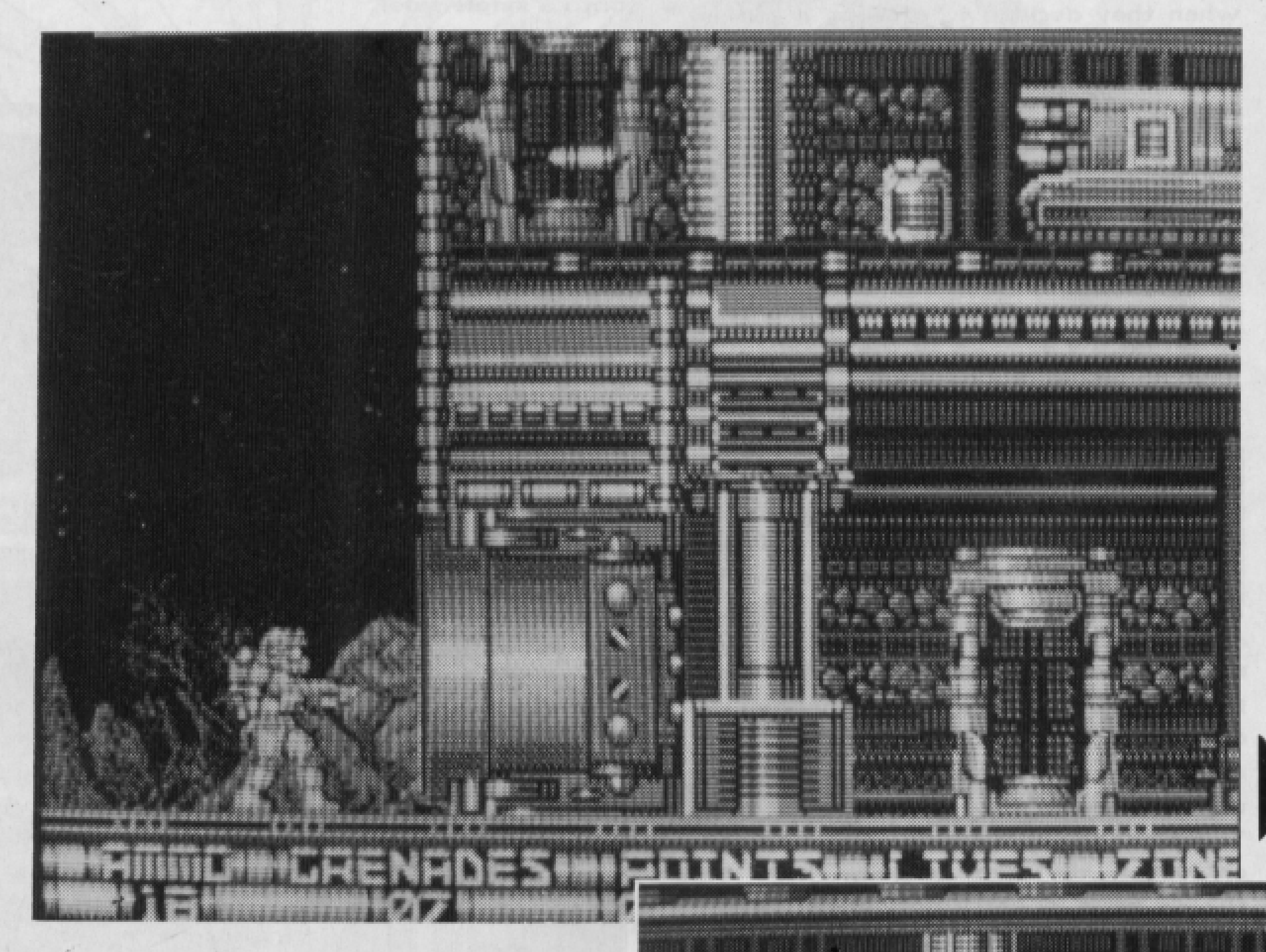
OVERALL 51%


38

Exolon



Continuing Hewson's assault on the 16-bit front comes Exolon, a flick-screen shoot 'em up converted from Raphael Ceccio's 8-bit original. Steve Jarratt wonders if it's another case of a pint in a quart pot.

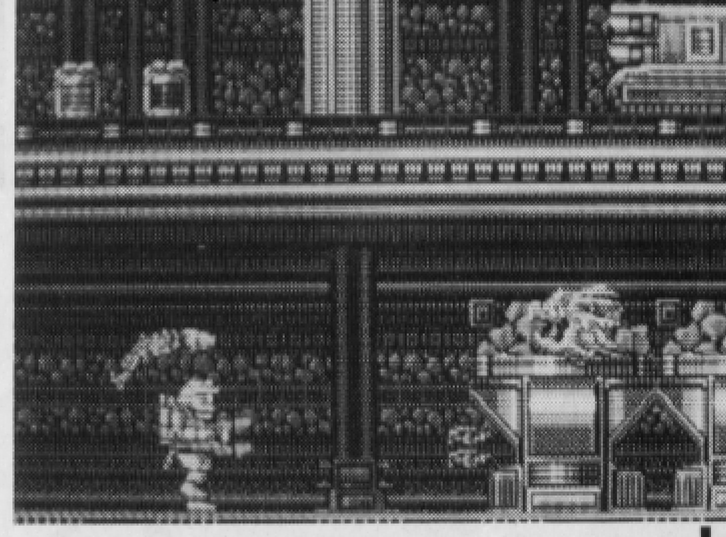


Exolon's scenario requires the negotiation of five levels of unknown territory, blasting aliens and destroying or avoiding obstacles which block the way. The player guides the space-suited figure of Vitorc across an alien environment set over 125 flick-screens; each scene appears sequentially, and once left cannot be re-entered.

Vitorc's path is barred by all manner of obstructions, inanimate or otherwise. Alien swarms appear overhead and can be shot using Vitorc's blaster or evaded by ducking down. Other more solid obstacles, such as walls and gun emplacements, can be removed permanently by firing self-propelled grenades. These small missiles home in on enemy installations, but only have a short range and fall harmlessly to the ground if unable to reach the intended target. Other alien defences include land mines and pods which rapidly and unexpectedly rise up from the ground. Contact with either removes one of Citoro's nine lives.

The alien complex is set over two levels, the upper of which is accessed by transporters. The choice of route and inability to retrace steps facilitates the need for mapping of some sort to aovid repeated mistakes on later missions.

Having battled through three alien-infested screens, Vitorc prepares to enter the more densely populated realms of a bizarre tunnel of sorts.



Vitorc lets rip with a self-propelled grenade to clear the first of the two obstructions barring his way. Extra ammunition and grenades sit in cannisters at the top of the screen, but there's no way he can collect them – there's no going back, and the teleporter is on the previous screen.


40



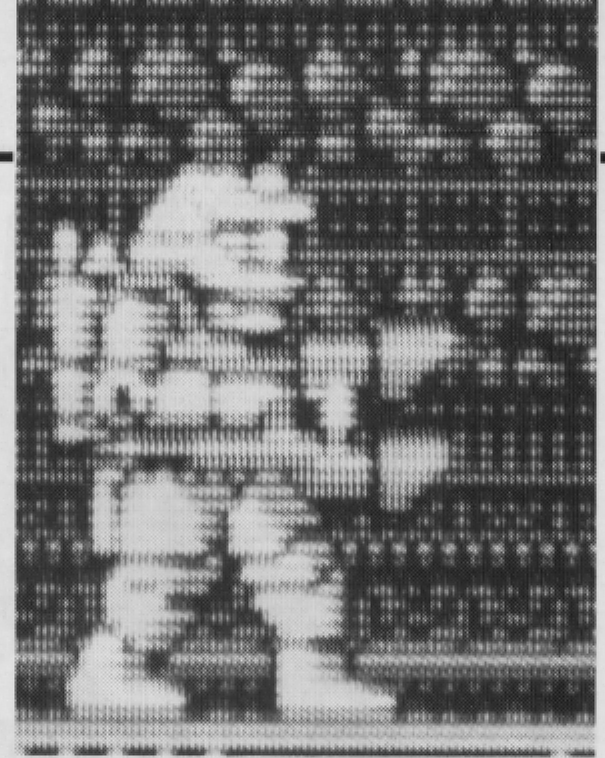
Exolon was a hit when it first appeared on 8-bit and is very much a game tailored to the requirements of those machines. As such, it presented some problems for Hewson when they decided to produce a conversion. The project was given to relative new-comer Martin Bysh, a 19 year-old whose previous work was the vertically scrolling shoot 'em up, Foundations Waste, on the Exocet label. "Initially, we wanted to make it a more of a 16-bit game," declares Martin. "Obviously the graphics could be improved, but the gameplay had to remain more or less the same to retain the essence of the original. We have re-designed the layout, though, from the earlier versions.

"I first started work on Exolon before last Christmas, when we had decided to make the main character much larger – the main sprite was then about 50 pixels tall. This caused problems however, since the background graphics had to be bigger to incorporate this larger figure. As the game grew in size, we lost the playability. The platform element had almost disappeared and it was felt that the gameplay was suffering too much. In the end we decided to scrap it and start again; the result is more in line with the original game, and is much more playable."

The large size of the original was also to create one or two headaches: Exolon is 125 screens long and contains over 100K of graphics just to animate the main character. "Memory is a problem," Martin admits. "Each of the five levels have to be loaded separately, and I've had to reformat the 3½" disk: it now squeezes 420K onto a single side!"

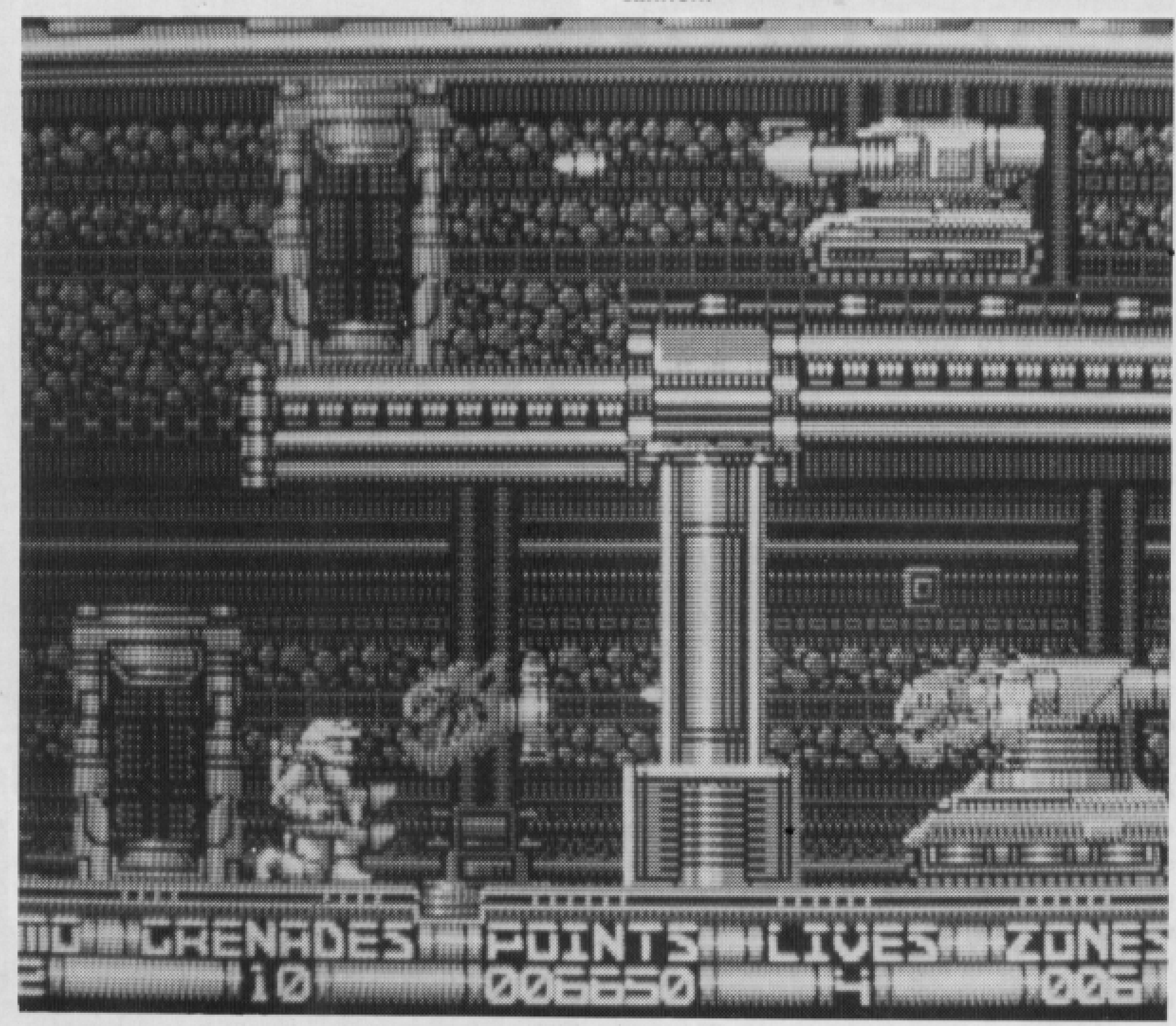
ST The simple aim of Exolon hardly smacks of innovation, but the gameplay is strong enough to justify its purchase. The smart, if repetitive graphics provide an initial lure, but thereafter the gameplay takes over. In fact, Exolon can prove annoyingly addictive: each successive go sees slightly more progress and there is a constant urge to 'just get past that last screen'. There are one or two drawbacks, however, in that the game is quite large, and there's no level entry option; each game begins from scratch and repeatedly playing through the early screens could soon prove tiresome. As with the majority of Hewson products, the ST's sound chip is put to useful employment in producing a reasonable tune and effects, without using scratchy samples.

PRICE:	£19.99
RELEASE DATE:	October
GRAPHICS	70%
SOUND	69%
PLAYABILITY	68%
VALUE	60%
OVERALL	**66%**



All tooled up with nowhere to go . . . except deeper into trouble. Vitorc undergoes a change of clothes, donning the exoskeleton found on the fifth screen. His firepower is now doubled, but at the expense of speed. It's a bit like wading through treacle.

Weird aliens and aggressive obstacles abound, much to the horror of our besuited hero. The teleporter to the left of Vitorc takes him to the uppermost level – and straight into the sights of another cannon.





An Amiga version is planned, but Hewson have not yet signed up an author. Enhancements will be made over the ST Exolon but in what area, and to what degree still has to be decided. Obviously no firm release date is available as yet.



PC versions of Hewson products may well be forthcoming after the PC Show at Earls Court. Andrew Hewson has expressed a desire to first get a reaction from the American market to their current 16-bit products, before committing funds to further conversions.



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Final A

Mountain climbing has never been easy... until now. Gary Whitta packs his rucksack and takes his pick to tackle Epyx's Final Assault. But does this unusual simulation scale the highest heights?

If you've ever wanted to try your hand at the hazardous hobby of mountain climbing, but couldn't quite pluck up the courage, you can now scale the highest mountain from the comfort of your own armchair – thanks to the arrival of **Final Assault**.

Epyx's latest takes you from the preparation for your climb and hiking to the mountains, right up to the final assault.

Final Assault takes place in the heart of the Alps, where some of the world's highest and most demanding mountains reside, including the Eiger and Mont Blanc. There are six climbing routes to choose from. Alternatively, you can resume a saved game, or go on a training climb on a beginner's mountain where you can learn basic climbing skills and break-in your boots.

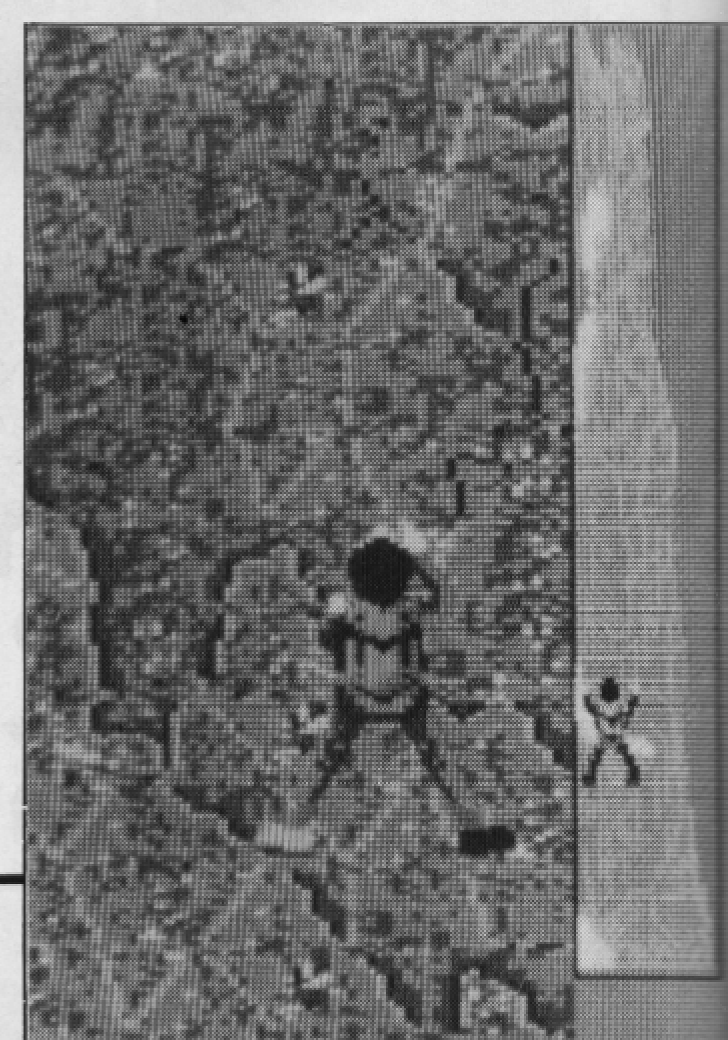
Selecting a route for the climb sends you on to the preparation screen, where you pack your rucksack with the equipment. You don't have to go through this though, as your rucksack is automatically supplied with a selection of items. It's best not to neglect this screen however, as the rucksack may be holding things you don't need, or missing things you do. Your sack holds a reasonably large selection of items, but it's best not to take too much. Each item weighs something, and overloading will hinder your progress.

When your sack is well and truly packed, all that's left to do is decide when you're going to leave. You can choose between a summer or a winter climb and decide at what time of the day to climb.

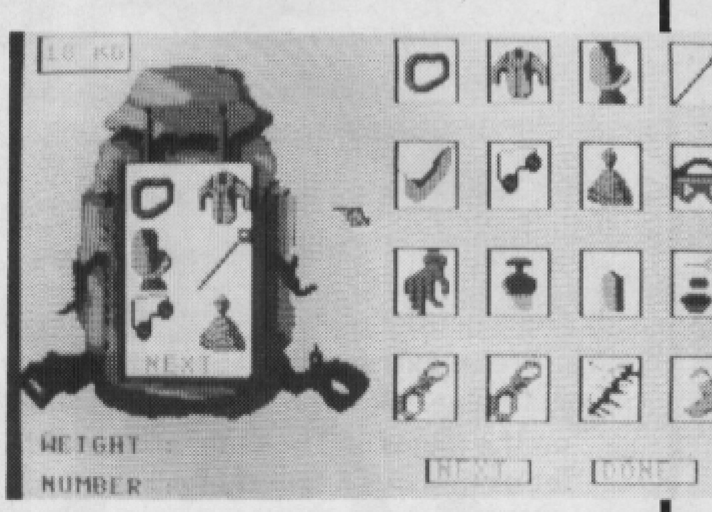
You now find yourself on the trail a short distance from the mountain base. To get to the mountain, a brisk hike is in order. To walk from left to right, a steady left-right joystick movement in time with the on-screen character's legs must be employed. This is the biathlon event from one of Epyx's previous releases similar to **Winter Games**. It's also possible to execute an athletic little jump by pushing the stick forward. This, coupled with the ice axe you're given to test the ground, allows you to spot and avoid any hidden crevasses.

The display changes once you actually make it to the mountain. The screen is now split vertically in half. There are two types of mountain terrain: ice and rock. Each requires a lot of practice if any progress is to be made. When

Climbing a rock face as steep as this is far from easy, especially when you need to think about moving your hand and feet.



ssault

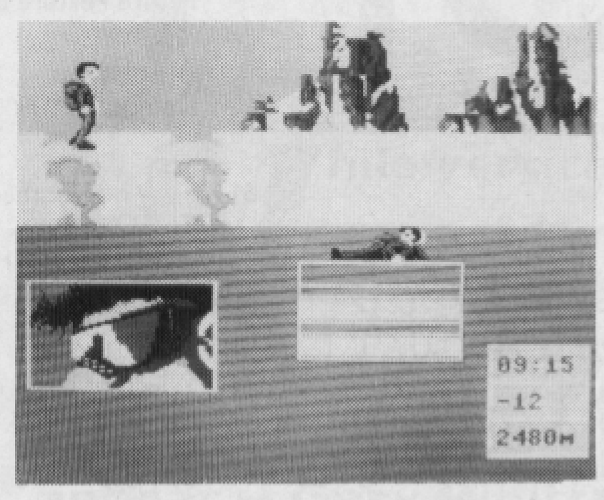


Take your time packing your rucksack. Those pitons you forgot to include could cost you your life later on in the game.

climbing on ice, the first thing to do is put on a pair of crampons – special boot spikes – which allow you to get a better foothold. Climbing is a slow and sometimes painful affair. Moving a step up on the mountain is accomplished by a series of joystick movements, ie: up, down, fire, down, which must be executed in the correct order or the climber slides back down the mountain. While on the mountain, it's important to remember that if you want to access supplies from your backpack, you have to strap youself to the mountain first to prevent yourself from falling backwards.

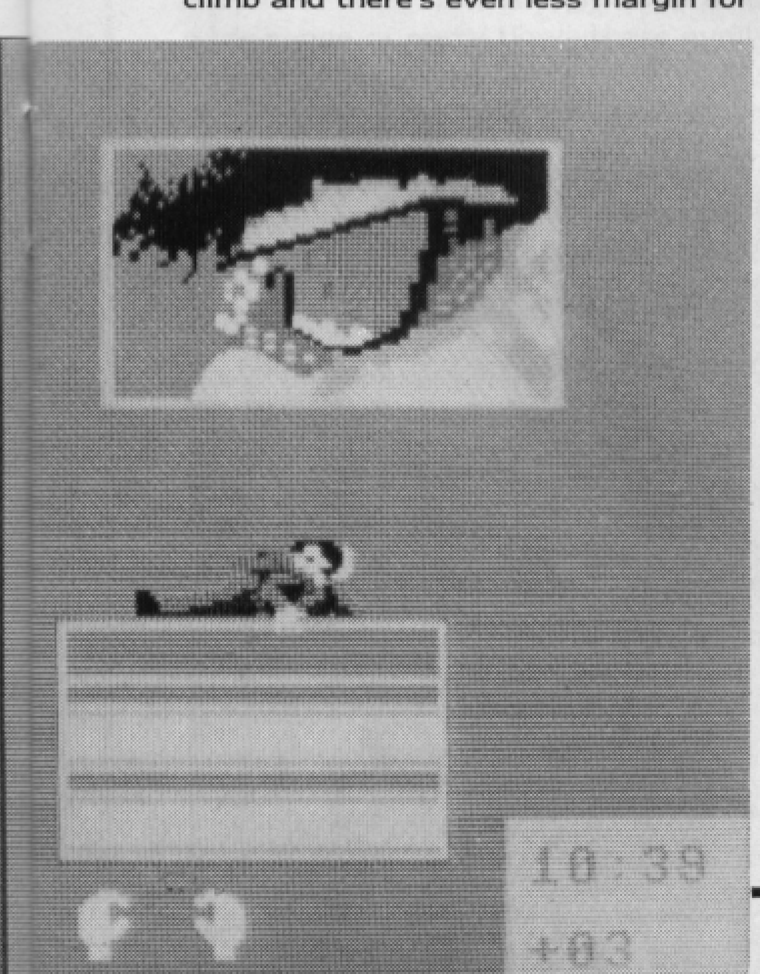
After you've conquered the ice section, an even tougher challenge is waiting above.

Rock is a great deal more difficult to climb and there's even less margin for



error. Before headway can be made, equipment needs to be changed round. Crampons must be removed and replaced by soft shoes, and a helmet has to be worn for protection. Rock climbing demands a more dextral use of joystick, which is used to secure holds on the rock. To move up rock, a precise series of steps must be followed. Firstly, hands or feet are selected for movement. That hand or foot must then be up or down, before pulling yourself up, down or sideways. This sounds a rather simplistic process, but it ensures you always have at least three holds on the rock, which is the minimum. Its a difficult task at the best of times, and moving upwards is even more difficult. To make things a little easier though, you can use a rope to help you climb.

The problem with using a rope is that you have to pack a whole host of other equipment that accompanies it, such as carabiners, pitons, ice pins and a hammer. Without these, the rope is useless. Completing one of the mountains by reaching its summit means you can add your name to the list of elite climbers before starting afresh on a different mountain and route.



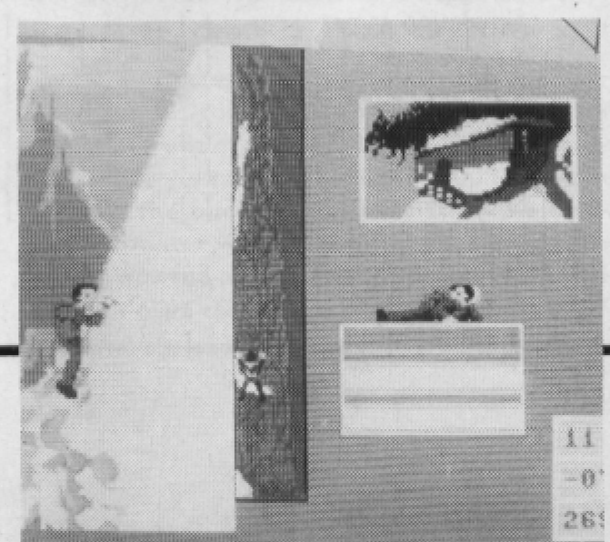
ST Final Assault is an admiral attempt at producing an unusual simulation even if it bears a similarity to an Infograme's product released last year. It's certainly not a subject one would expect to find entertaining, but the approach is effective enough, combining hand-eye co-ordination with just enough aforethought required to keep your mind ticking over. Despite the fact that it's the gameplay which makes Final Assault surprisingly gripping, so both the graphics and sound could have been enhanced considerably. Still, if you don't mind your action at a slow pace and find the idea of mixing a bit of strategy with some careful preparation appealing, Final Assault is the man for the job. It's a rewarding experience – provided you've got the patience and determination to succeed.

RELEASE DATE:	Out Now
PRICE:	£19.99
GRAPHICS	37%
SOUND	31%
PLAYABILITY	55%
VALUE	50%

OVERALL 58%



The Amiga version of Final Assault should be available in November and promises enhanced graphics and sound, while gameplay should remain the same.



WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE ONE?

Dear Reader,

We're extremely pleased that you've bought our very first issue. We hope that you like what you've discovered on the pages of The One, and would be grateful if you'd let us find out a few things about you.

We'd be so grateful in fact that we'll send a free games disk to the first fifty readers who return the questionnaire below to us.

Cheers!

Gary Penn
EDITOR

1) Which of the following computers, if any, do you own/likely to buy?

	OWN	MAY BUY
Atari ST	[ ]	[ ]
Commodore Amiga	[ ]	[ ]
PC Compatible	[ ]	[ ]
Spectrum	[ ]	[ ]
Commodore 64	[ ]	[ ]
Other Commodore	[ ]	[ ]
Amstrad	[ ]	[ ]
BBC	[ ]	[ ]
Don't own a computer	[ ]	[ ]

2) Which of the following peripherals, if any do you own/likely to buy?

	OWN	MAY BUY
Sound Synthesizer	[ ]	[ ]
Printer	[ ]	[ ]
Modem	[ ]	[ ]
Additional Disk Drive	[ ]	[ ]
Hard Disk	[ ]	[ ]
Digitiser	[ ]	[ ]
Graphics Pad	[ ]	[ ]
High Resolution mono monitor	[ ]	[ ]
Colour monitor	[ ]	[ ]
Midi interface	[ ]	[ ]

3) How many of these type of games do you own?

	NONE	1-3	4-6	7-9	10+
Simulation games	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Arcade games	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Strategy games	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Adventure games	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
War games	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Shoot-em-ups	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

4) How many games do you buy, on average, each month?

0-1	2-3	4-6	7+
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

5) How interesting do you find each of the following in this issue of The One?

	VERY INTERESTING	OK	NOT VERY INTERESTING
Reviews	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Previews	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Hints and Tips	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
News	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Future Feature on CD Systems	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Arcades	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
Demos	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

6) How many other people have read or looked at this copy of The One?

NONE	1	2	3	4	5 or more
[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

7) Which of these other computer magazines do you read regularly (ie. at least one out of every two issues)?

ST World	[ ]	ST Action	[ ]
ST User	[ ]	ST Update	[ ]
Amiga User	[ ]	Amiga Computing	[ ]
Your Amiga	[ ]	ST Amiga Format	[ ]
ACE	[ ]	The Games Machine	[ ]
Computer and Video Games	[ ]		

8) How old are you?

Under 14	[ ]	20	[ ]
15	[ ]	21	[ ]
16	[ ]	22	[ ]
17	[ ]	23	[ ]
18	[ ]	24	[ ]
19	[ ]	25 or older	[ ]

9) Are you . . .

At work — full time	[ ]
At work — part time	[ ]
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Many thanks for your help!

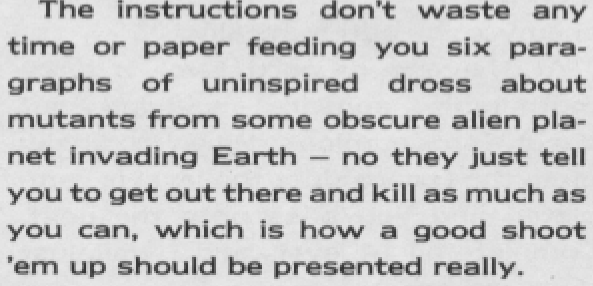
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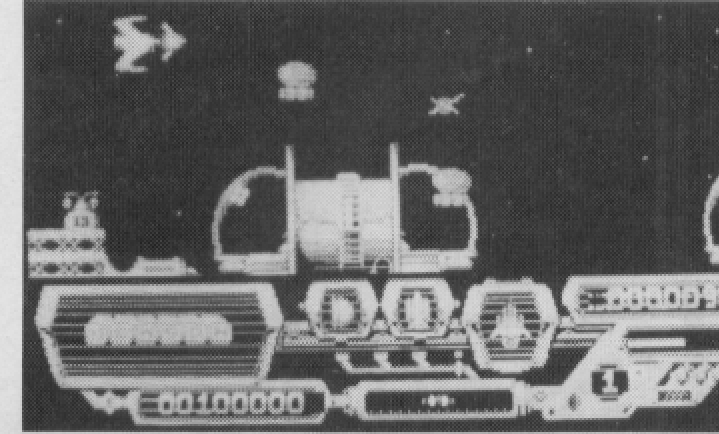
Zynaps

While vertically scrolling shoot 'em ups are two-a-penny on the ST and Amiga, the 'progressive' blaster is genre that 16-bit owners very rarely get to see. Hewson's Zynaps is one of the first to appear — Gary Whitta lets rip...

So what exactly is a progressive shoot 'em up? Well as opposed to a shoot 'em up where you simply blast everything in sight from beginning to end, a progressive blaster allows you to collect extra weapons and features to customise your ship as you go along. **Sidewinder** was the first of its kind to do this, but extra weapons were rather limited. **Zynaps**, however, is very much more in the mould of coin-op classics such as **Nemesis** and **Salamander**, where a wide range of extra powers are available to you.

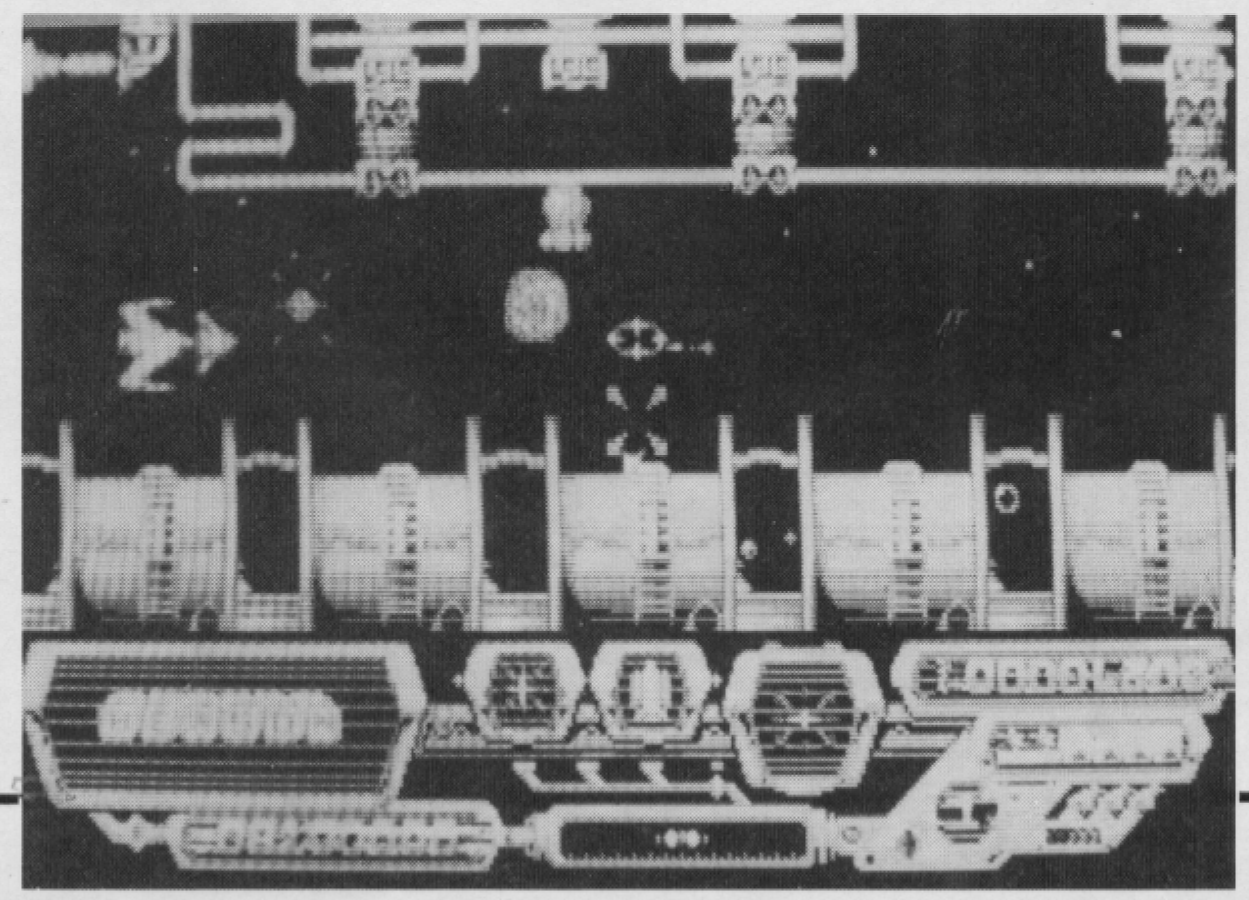


The instructions don't waste any time or paper feeding you six paragraphs of uninspired dross about mutants from some obscure alien planet invading Earth — no they just tell you to get out there and kill as much as you can, which is how a good shoot 'em up should be presented really.



Mind the oranges, Marlon! (Copyright: Gary Whitta School Of Uninformative Minimalist Captions).

The similarity that **Zynaps** bears to games like **Salamander** becomes apparent when it loads. The action takes place over 14 levels of horizontally scrolling alien territory, but unlike other horizontal scrollers such as **Star-Ray**, you can't change direction and



Press and hold down the fire button before collecting the flashing object in front of the ship and a super-skill missile will be yours. Better still, pick up the token without the button depressed. Now the weaponry counter will advance so you can acquire a better weapon by holding down fire when you run over the next flashing token.

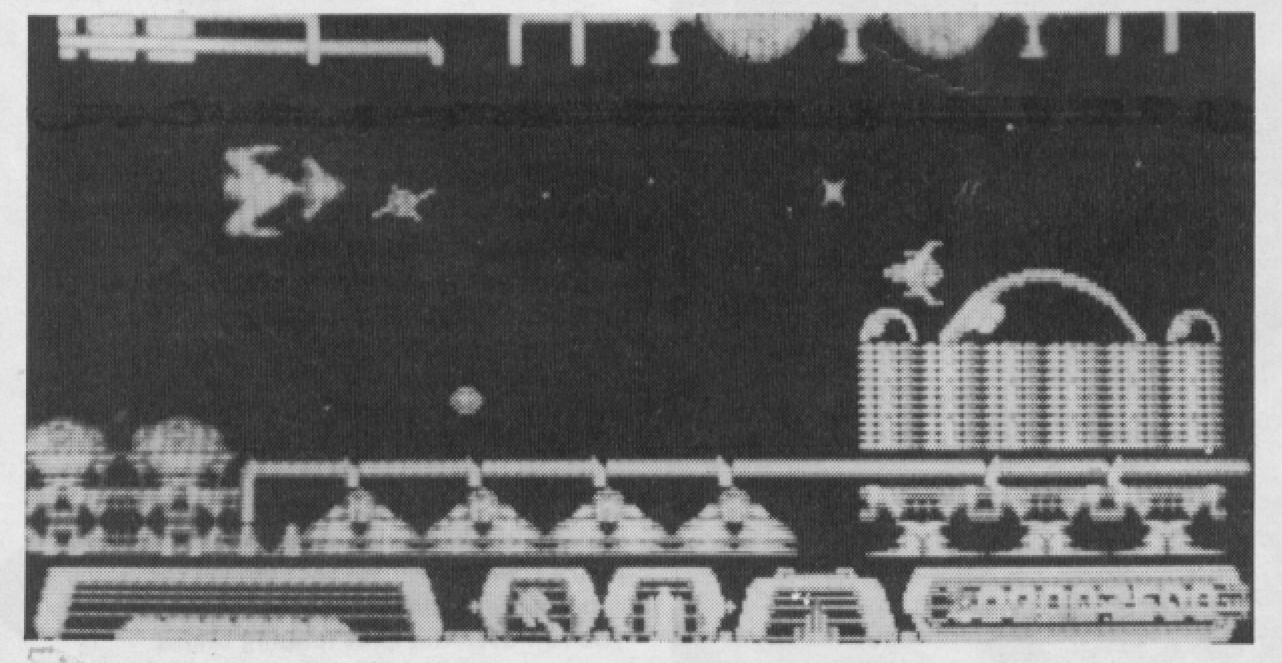


you can't affect the speed of the scrolling. Zynaps employs a fixed speed continuous scrolling technique which forces you on even if you would rather stop and make a cup of tea.

Aliens tend to attack in waves rather than singularly, usually in a caterpillar type formation. Collision with aliens or scenery is immediately fatal, and so it helps to blast the beggars before they get too close. Clearing a wave of aliens results in a floating icon being left behind; fly over it while holding down the fire button, and your speed or firepower is bumped up. Collecting an icon without the fire button pressed changes the type of feature activated when you collect another icon while holding down fire. It's a simple enough system that works well. Among the features that can be collected are extra speed, more bullets, bombs (used to destroy any land-based target and missiles), and missiles which lock onto and destroy enemy ships automatically.

At the end of each level there's something big and nasty to dispose off... and this is what you can expect to see at the end of Level One.

At the end of each level, a large mothership appears, spewing out deadly space mines. When it finally bites the (space)dust the level is completed and you pass onto the next. Complete all 14 levels and... well, just wait and see.



Flying through the cavernous confines of the first level. An alien mine is about to turn your ship into a fireworks display for all but yourself to see.

A section of the loading screen – an accurate portrayal of the superb packaging artwork.



Zynaps rates as one of the best ST blasters to appear to date. Hewson have done a remarkable job of converting it to the ST, and credit must go to Pete Lyon for providing some neat graphics, which reach near-coin-op quality in some places. If the game has a weak point, it's the sound. The loading theme and high score tune are good enough, but the in-game effects are rather poor. Still the gameplay is addictive, and the difficulty level is just right, so it should have ST gamers stuck to their joysticks for a good few weeks after purchase. Zynaps is an enjoyable slice of blasting action, and the fact that there are hardly any progressive shoot 'em ups available, let alone decent ones, is all the more reason to take a look. It's what your ST has been waiting for.

PRICE:	£19.99
RELEASE DATE:	Out Now
GRAPHICS	70%
SOUND	66%
PLAYABILITY	72%
VALUE	66%

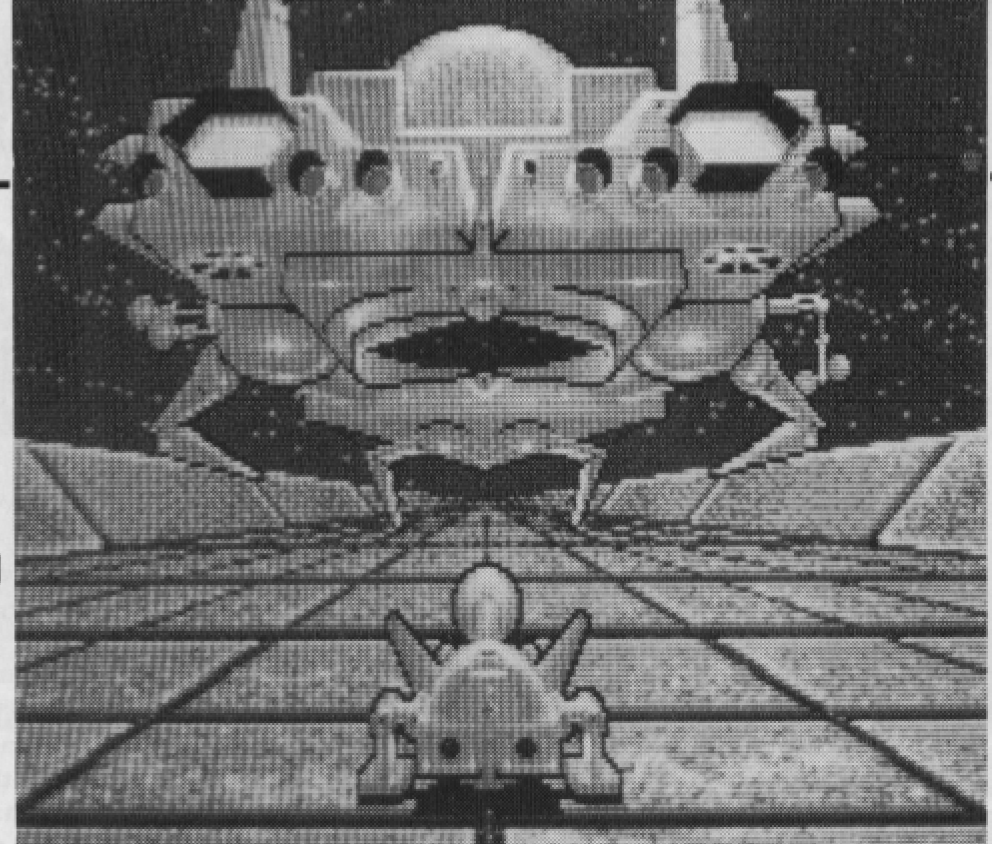
OVERALL 73%



The Amiga version of Zynaps is shaping up very well indeed. It should look very much like its ST counterpart, and should play the same too. The only major difference will be the sound, which is enhanced to make use of the Amiga's superior capabilities. Expect to see something at the PC Show – or failing that, late September.


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PLAYMASTERS: MICKEY MOUSE MAPPED, BARD'S TALE PLAYERS GUIDE
REVIEWS: ROCKET RANGER EXCLUSIVE, STAR RAY,
INTENSITY, VINDICATOR. WIN: A LOAD OF BALLS

Star Goose



Star Goose is a Logotron shoot 'em up from ex-Denton Design programmers Graham 'Kenny' Everett and Steve Cain, whose previous exploits include Black Lamp and Star Trek. Julian Rignall looks beyond the bas-relief horizon.

Although **Star Goose** is essentially a vertically scrolling shoot 'em up, it actually has a three-dimensional element. The terrain is comprised of hills and valleys which the **Star Goose** land vehicles negotiates. Since its forward-firing guns are static this means that when the craft drives up or down a hill its bullets either fire into the air or hit the ground. Consequently it's impossible to hit objects unless the Goose is either on the same level, or the intended target is on the brow or immediately at the bottom of a hill.

At the start of a game an excellent animated sequence shows the Goose being beamed down from a mothership (thankfully, the sequence can be skipped) and the action begins.

The objective is very straightforward: guide the Goose across eight wrap-around levels and collect six coloured crystals from each by running over them. This task is made more difficult with the presence of hostile enemy installations and craft which fire missiles, laser bursts and bombs at the ship, reducing its shield levels on contact.

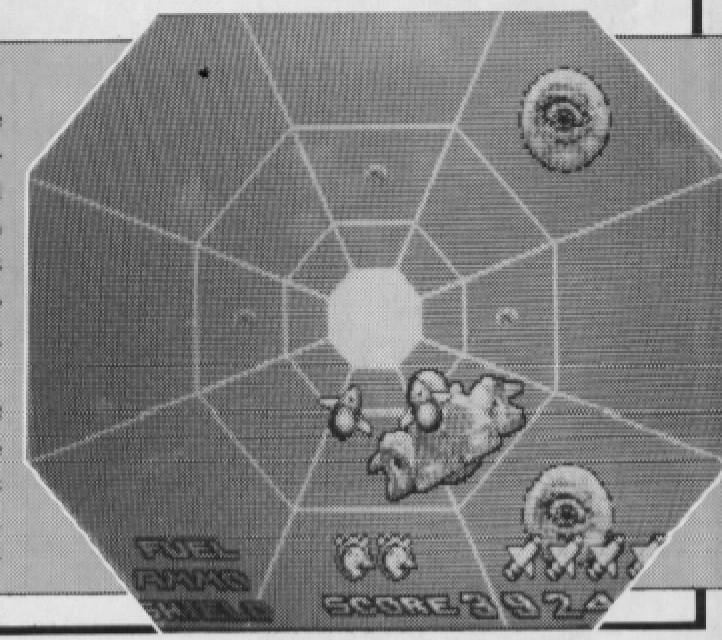
Shield levels are also depleted by crashing into an enemy craft or emplacement, and are drained entirely as the Goose is driven into a hole in the landscape. Fuel and ammunition levels are similarly expended through use.

As well as bullets, the Goose is armed with a limited supply of rockets, which are primed and launched from the keyboard to send them roaring up the landscape to destroy the first thing they encounter. If a rocket doesn't hit anything before it goes off the top of the screen, it's wasted. In the midst of the action firing a missile can be awkward (the ALT and CAPS LOCK keys are used) – surely it would have been better to use a double press of the fire button instead?

TUNNEL VISION

On each of the landscapes are three tunnels which may be entered to replenish shield, ammunition and fuel supplies. Inside, the ship is viewed in 3D from behind, and the player flies down the circular tunnel attempting to run over the eyes that lie on the floor, sides and ceiling.

The faster the ship is travelling, the higher it can climb up the sides of the tunnel. When maximum speed is attained it can actually loop-the-loop, collecting every eye it passes! Howev-



er, due care and attention must be taken to ensure that the Goose doesn't leave the tunnel upside down (whereupon it explodes) or at too high a speed (it could crash into an installation or enemy ship outside the exit). In between levels a similar tunnel is endured, but eyes are picked up for a large points bonus. Be careful here, as some inter-level tunnels are deceptively short.

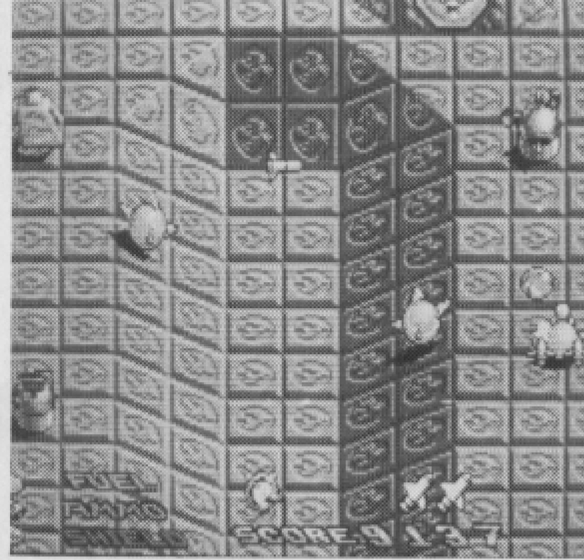
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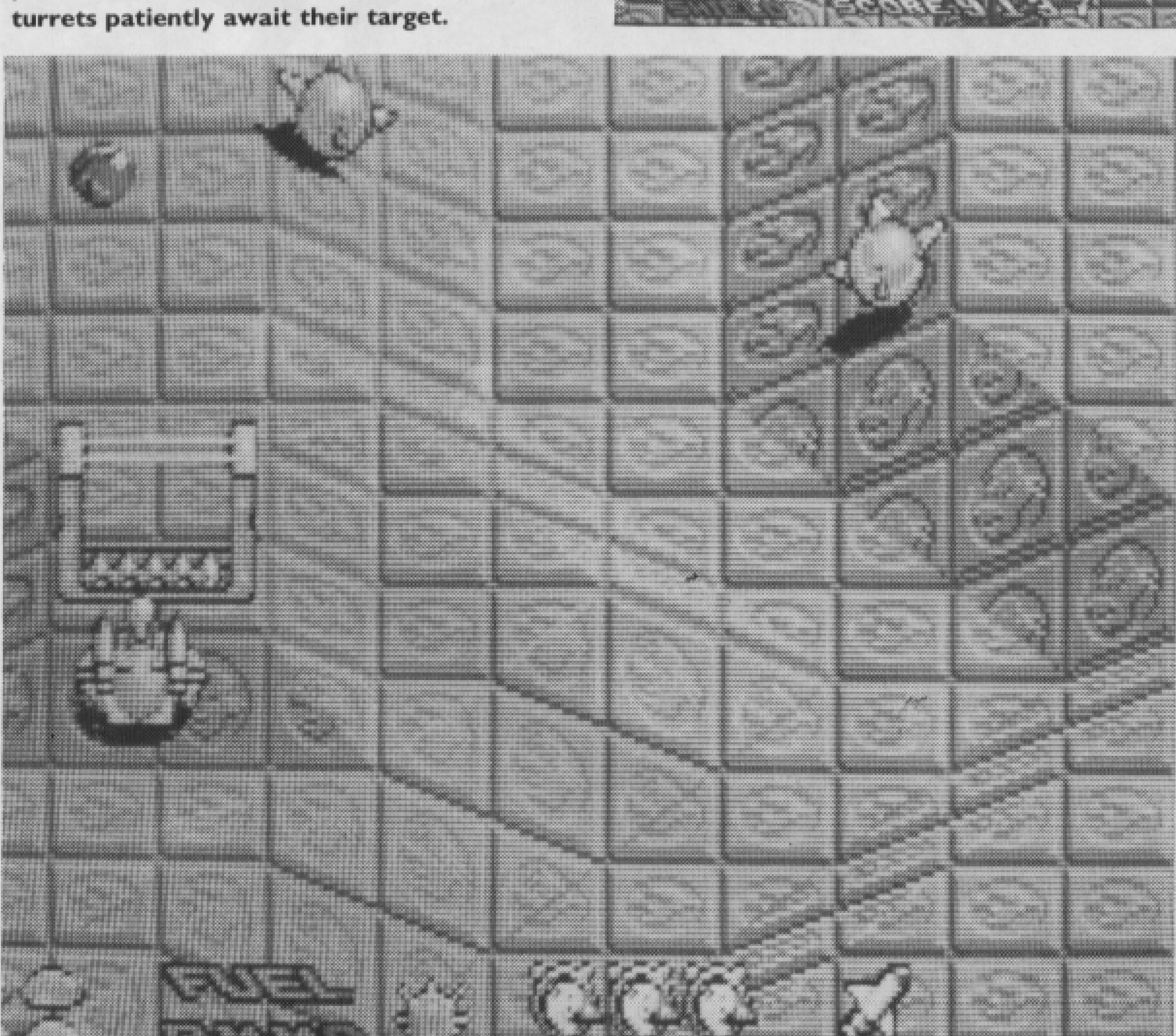
When all the crystals have been collected, the Goose is driven to the exit point – a blue door in the landscape – and is transported to the next level.

The player starts a game with four lives, and extra ones are earned at regular 100,000 point intervals. When the last life is lost, a new game can be restarted on the current level by pressing the fire button. Pressing the ESC key, however, resets the game and play starts on Level One.

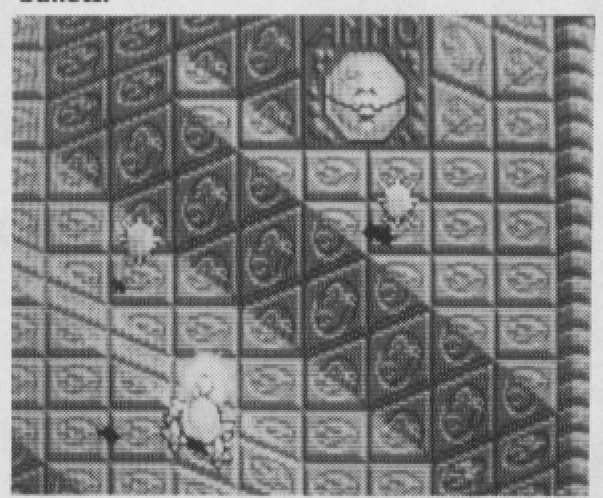
Driving through the missile gate endows the Star Goose with an extra complement of missiles, which are essential on higher levels, where less accessible packs of rocket launchers, mortars and laser turrets patiently await their target.

One of the more frenetic moments in Star Goose. The Goose is about to pick up another crystal, but its chances of survival are slim. Trigger-happy gun emplacements either side of the bas-relief scenery are about to do their worst . . .





The entrance to an ammunition tunnel is in sight. Provided the Goose can avoid ramming either of the two mines, he should soon be speeding down a tunnel, collecting some much needed extra bullets.



A

Star Goose on the Amiga should hit the streets at the same time as the ST version. It's also been done by Graham and Steve, which is why it looks and plays exactly the same. That said, we won't provide any ratings until we've seen a 100% finished version. Check out the news pages next month for an update . . .

ST

Quite surprisingly, the scrolling isn't particularly smooth – at high speeds the landscape strobes, ruining the otherwise pleasing bas-relief backdrop effect. A few of the sprites are pretty, but generally they're uninspired and unimpressive; they simply lack flair and character. The music is similarly dull, and grates after a few games; the sound effects are marginally better. However, the biggest fault of all is the lack of challenge and variety. Each of the eight levels is fundamentally the same, and only offer increased density of enemy installations and more mountainous terrain as the player progresses. The difficulty level isn't particularly high, and the continue game option allows far too much progression. Indeed, a reasonably adept player should be able to go through all the levels in one sitting, which severely impairs lasting appeal. A year ago Star Goose would have undoubtedly been a hit, but compared with today's high standards it lacks the polish, playability and challenge of many similarly priced games.

PRICE:	£19.95
RELEASE DATE:	September
GRAPHICS	68%
SOUND	56%
PLAYABILITY	50%
VALUE	41%
OVERALL	**51%**

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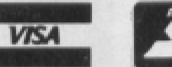
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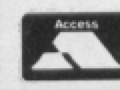
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TIPS

It's all very well knowing which games are worthy of your undivided attention, but there comes a point when someone, somewhere needs to know more than just how well they play. So, if you happen to have stumbled across any useful cheat modes, general hints or listings which could bring relief to hands of frustrated games players, why not play the Good Samaritan and share your findings? Send them to TIPS, The One, Priority Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON EC1R 3AU. And just to make it worth your while there's software up for grabs for the sender of the best tips we print each month.

CHUBBY GRISTLE

Grandslam

On the title screen, type BUUURRP (RETURN) to be greeted with a sampled belch (very tasteful) to indicate that the cheat mode is operative. Infinite Chubbies are now yours for the wasting, although it's worth noting that the game still ends when you pick up the pipe.

BETTER DEAD THAN ALIEN

Elektra

Steve Williams of County Durham has leapt to the aid of all anguished souls struggling to get onto the later levels of this Galaxians clone. Here's a complete set of codes for all the levels. Give that man a see-gar.

LEVEL	PASSWORD
01	ELEKTRA
02	SYZYGY
03	DRAMBUIE
04	PLUG
05	SOPRANO
06	MAYONNAISE
07	FAUCET
08	POTATO
09	WOOMERA
10	NARCISSUS
11	NARCISSUS
12	DEBUTANTE
13	FIRKIN
14	TRIPTYCH
15	JABBERWOCKY
16	WHIMSICAL
17	CORNUCOPIA
18	PUNJABI
19	TIDDLY POM
20	KEWPIE DOLL
21	SEPULCHRE
22	EUPHEMISM
23	GRAMMARIAN
24	CROSSWORD
25	QUARANTINE

ARKANOID: REVENGE OF DOH

Imagine

Peter Johnson managed to spare five minutes from converting this excellent sequel onto the Amiga to provide us with a useful cheat for the ST version. When you lose all your lives and are returned to the title screen, hit the CAPS LOCK and type DALEY88 for a handy continue play feature. Now when you start a new game, you're returned to the screen on which you died. Repeat when necessary...

Pete's also given us another cheat mode for **Revenge Of Doh**, which we won't tell you until the next issue.

WIZBALL

Ocean

Amiga **Wizball** players can now finish the game with ease thanks to this three-level cheat from Peter Johnson, the man responsible for its conversion. Pause the game during play and type RAINBOW. Unpause and press C to fill the current cauldron. To progress at an even faster rate, pause again, type RAINBOW again, unpause and press S to finish the current level. And even better still, if you want to complete the game in a single keystroke, pause and type RAINBOW yet again before unpausing. Now all you have to do is hit T to fill the current cauldron and complete the game.

CARRIER COMMAND

Rainbird

A life on the ocean waves. But it's not all a seabed of roses. If you've not yet managed to master the helm, here are a few tips to make sure your Carrier stays shipshape and generally intact for more than five minutes...

On reaching an enemy island, get as close as you can without grounding, and then turn the Carrier around by 180 degrees so that you can hit installations using surface-to-surface missiles.

Do not attempt to destroy the Marauders one by one as there can be up to 40 stationed in a silo (known as a Batcave) at any one time. When a Marauder is launched, it is fully refuelled, and armed with three seek-and-destroy missiles. Destroy the Batcave, and then dodge the remaining airborne Marauders until they have fired their quota of missiles. Then, either shoot the Marauders, or wait for them to run out of fuel and crash into the island. But remember that the Command Centre on the island will immediately start to rebuild anything that is destroyed.

Marauders never leave the immediate vicinity of the island, so if you're out to destroy a Batcave, fly around the island, thus avoiding the Maruaders, until you are as close to the Batcave as possible, then fly in for the kill.

Volcanic islands are extremely rich in fuel resources, so make as many of the volcanic islands as possible into Resource Islands.

Always have Virus bombs and ACCB's on high priority, as they are quite demanding on resources when being manufactured.

You can land your Manta's on enemy runways to refuel! However, make sure that you destroy all the missile launcher installations around the runway (aswell as the Batcave if the island has one), before attempting to land.

Always have the Automatic Repair Systems set on high priority in the Damage Control screen.

VIRUS

David Braben's Virus is unquestionably one of the most innovative pieces of software ever produced. It's also one of the most difficult to learn, let alone master. Julian Rignall offers a cure of sorts...

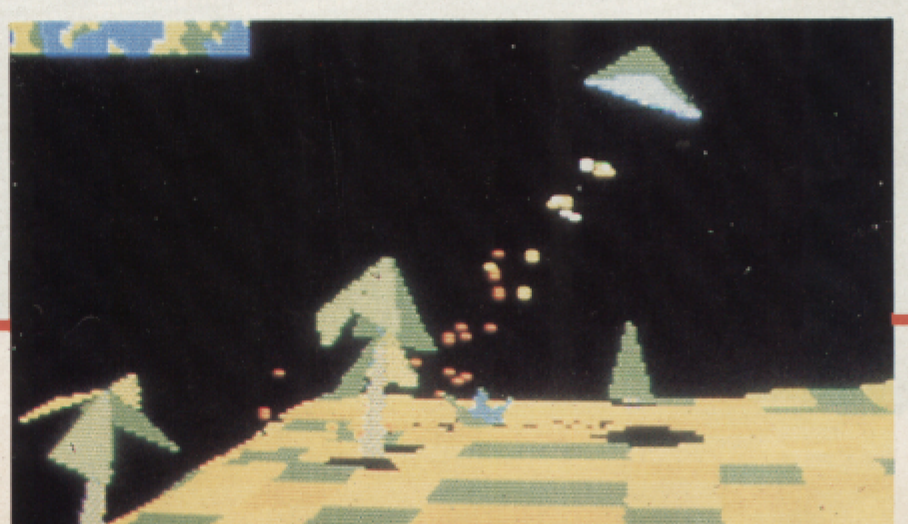
GETTING TO GRIPS...

To play Virus you must get to know the feel of the controls intimately. This may sound esoteric, so let me explain further.

Virus has one of the most unusual and subtle control methods yet devised for a computer game. In the hands of a novice the hoverplane pitches and yaws in the most unyeilding and drunken manner, while a master can perform the most intricate and precise manoeuvres with the merest twitch of the mouse. By the way, forget the keyboard option – unless you're an octopus with a brain in every tentacle, you'll find flying the plane with any degree of accuracy very difficult indeed.

If you're new to the game, pick up the mouse and place it in the centre of its running area – be it a mouse mat, tabletop or whatever. Make sure there are no objects nearby, and press fire to start a game. From now on, the central position is a reference point where you can return the mouse to stabilise the hoverplane.

Pressing thrust sends the ship into the air. Become familiar with the gravity, and get to know exactly how much thrust you have to apply to keep the ship airborne, and decelerate enough to stop



Practice thrusting and learn to turn on a ha'penny, and that's half the battle won.



Now you can thrust and manoeuvre with ease, get out there and give 'em what for...

it impacting on the ground. Remember: fuel supplies are limited, so you want to keep airborne using as little fuel as possible.

Now, pushing the mouse forward and thrusting sends the hoverplane forward, and the further forward it is, the faster it goes.

With practice you'll discover that tilting the plane and thrusting just enough results in a flightpath parallel to the ground – which is what you should aim for. An important point to remember is that the controls are very sensitive indeed, and only the slightest mouse movement is required to set the hoverplane pitching and rotating – so take it easy and get to know the feel. Also, don't forget the degree of the pitch, and rotation is proportional to the amount the mouse is moved; go too far from the central position and the plane tips over. If this happens, don't panic – just move the mouse back to central in the reverse direction you've just pushed it.

Once you've got the hang of forward movement, try moving the mouse from side to side to become familiar with the way rotation works. Also, try pulling back and thrusting to stop on the spot – an ideal technique for use in dogfights (more on that later).

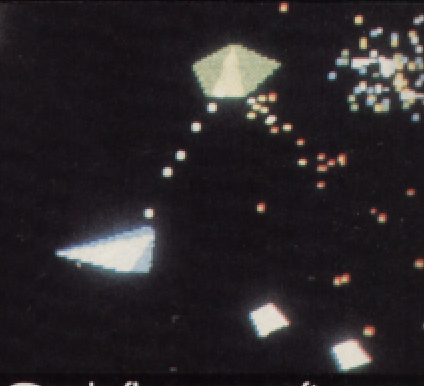
Although this may sound a little long-winded, it's essential to spend time mastering the controls. Once you're able to fly the hoverplane precisely and without error, you're well on the way to becoming a Virus master.

... AND ONTO THE MISSION

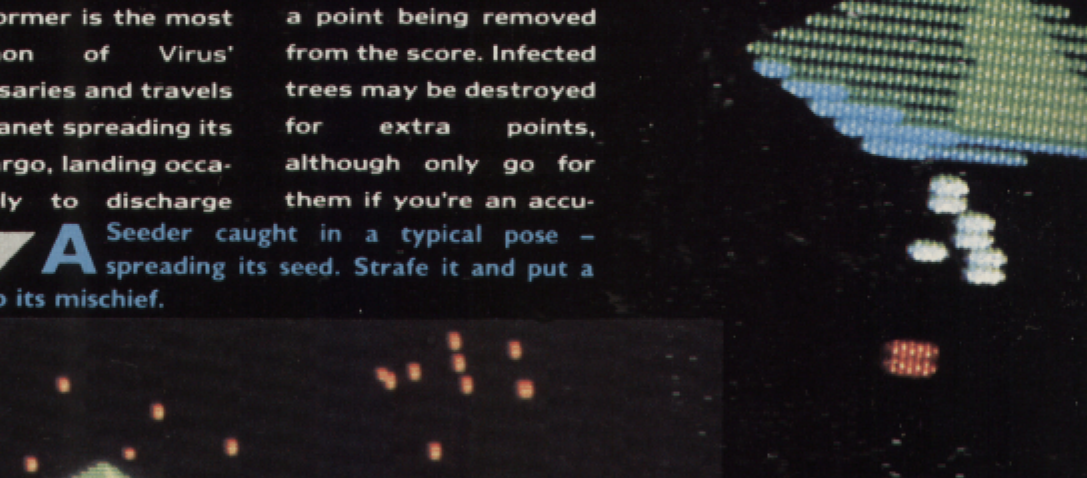
The objective is to keep the landscape clear of the deadly red virus: a task which requires the player to intercept and destroy a variety of alien craft. The primary targets are virus spreaders, which come in two forms: Seeders and Bombers. The former is the most common of Virus' adversaries and travels the planet spreading its red cargo, landing occasionally to discharge large volumes of the deadly seed. Since their flightpaths are very simple, they're easily intercepted and destroyed. Just fly close and strafe. If you miss, turn and strafe again. Try and spare the bullets – don't forget every wasted shot results in a point being removed from the score. Infected trees may be destroyed for extra points, although only go for them if you're an accu-

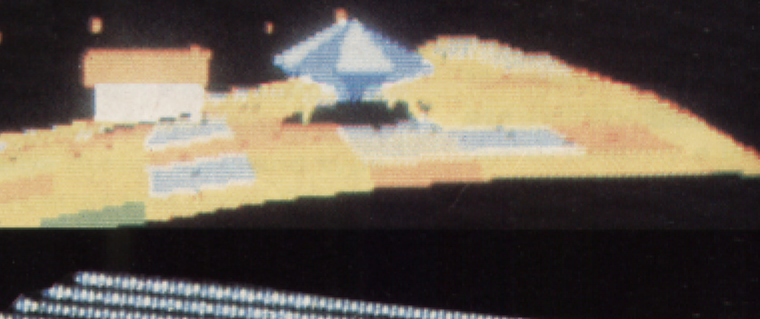
A Seeder caught in a typical pose – spreading its seed. Strafe it and put a stop to its mischief.

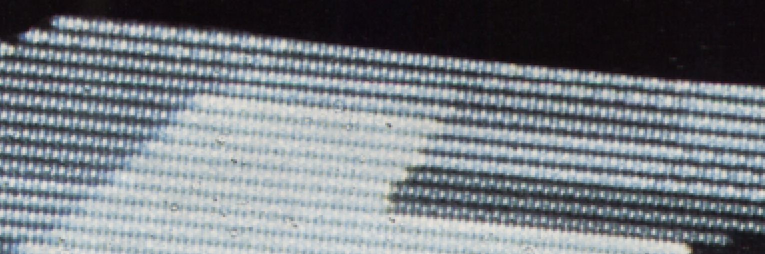


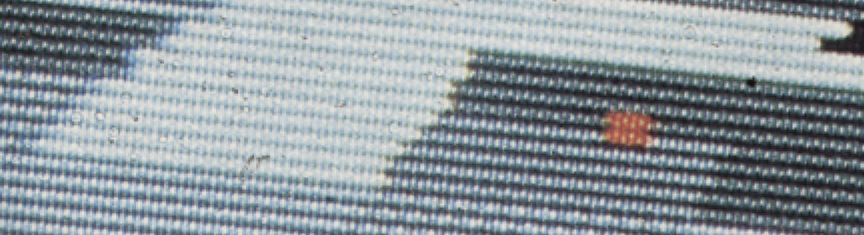


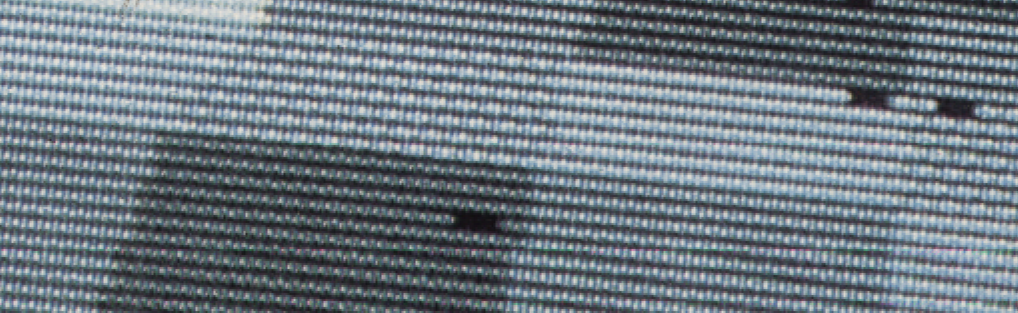
Sparks fly as your craft engages a[…] in head-to-head combat. Note [...] parachutes bearing virus cannisters.











s a Bomber
e the small
ers.

rate shot, otherwise you'll waste many points trying to blast them!

Bombers move very quickly in a straight line dropping cannisters of virus by parachute. Pursue the craft at high altitude on the same flightpath, and when both your and its blips are together on the radar screen, swoop down guns blazing and you should blast it out of the skies (as well as hitting a couple of parachutes into the bargain). By the way, don't drop too rapidly, otherwise you may hit a parachute. If you want to take the lazy option and use a homing missile, make sure you release it when the hover is in front of the Bomber, otherwise the missile may home in on a parachute.

Destroying a Bomber is a very tricky manoeuvre to accomplish successfully, but it's vital you master the technique, as Bombers are the most rapid deployers of the virus, and consequently are primary targets.

There are six attack craft, the least dangerous of which is the Drone. This red and brown ship pursues the hoverplane and attempts to destroy it. Its real aim in life is to shoot an infected tree and mutate into a red and purple Mutant, which is a stronger and faster version of a Drone. It then chases the hoverplane with renewed vigour and zest.

The best way to deal with these is fly to their location, and when you're close, stop on the spot and hover by repeatedly tapping the thrust button. Wait for the Drone or Mutant to come to you, and when it flies by, rotate and fire, spraying bullets into its flightpath.

It takes a little practice to do this, but it's a great way of getting rid of pursuing craft before they sneak up and blow the hoverplane out of the skies before you know what's happening.

A similar type of craft is the Fighter, although the red and orange craft is faster and has better firepower. Use the hover and blast method, and make sure you follow the craft as it flies by – two shots are required to destroy it, and you can't afford to let it by, as it'll turn and attack straight away.

▲ Don't waste your missiles – especially on something as relatively harmless as a Seeder. There's always something nastier around the corner.



◀ That colourful shower of pixels was a fighter a split-second ago. You won't get a second chance, so make every shot count. Hit 'em hard and fast – otherwise, you could be providing the fireworks.

▲ Seeders seem to lurk around every corner – and more often than not, they're polluting the land. Don't waste shots on contaminated trees unless your're confident of hitting them first time.

We have lift off! The starting point of every Virus mission...



Don't waste time admiring the scenery – or shooting it for that matter. Keep a beady eye on the radar and use the sound effects as a form of short-range warning.



Pests are purple and yellow horrors that home in on the hoverplane – they don't fire, but are fast and manoeuvrable enough to constitute a considerable health risk. Use the Drone and Mutant technique, but thrust upwards as it comes close, so if it does get past your fire, it'll fly under you.

The most deadly of all adversaries is the Attractor, which looks similar to a Seeder, but is red and white. It travels the landscape and shoots bolts of lightning at the scenery.

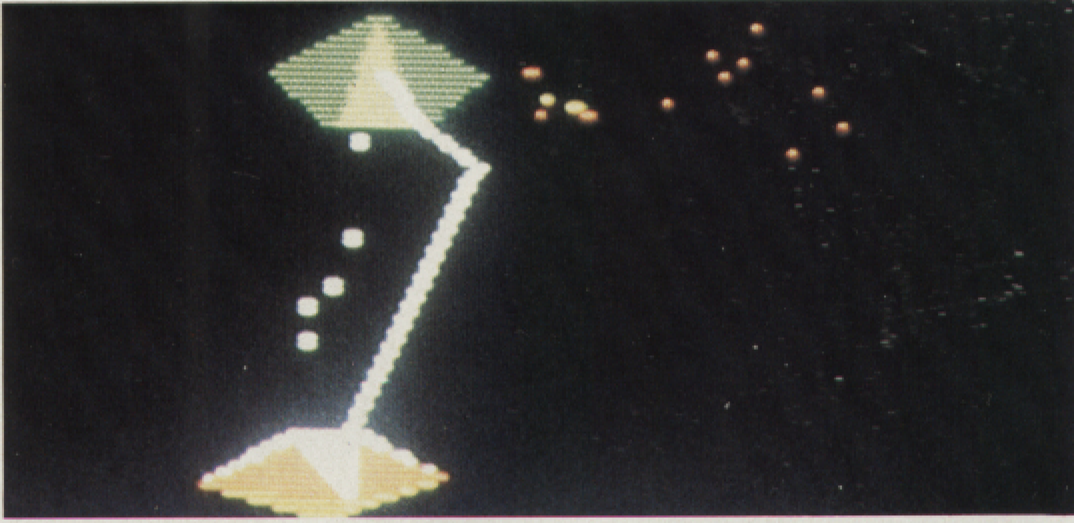
When the hoverplane draws close it shoots out a tractor beam which saps fuel and sends the plane plummetting earthwards. The best way to deal with one is to track it at very high altitude and dive down onto it almost vertically, firing rapidly. If it shoots out a tractor beam, thrust away as quickly as possible, twisting and rotating as you go, although in most cases the powerful beam smashes the plane into the ground!

Make sure that when you dive on the Attractor you're lined up and are sure that you're going to hit it – or at least have a chance of hitting it! You could always launch a couple of homing missiles just to make sure...

There's also a 'lethal mystery spacecraft' which as yet is undiscovered – if you find it, write into The One and tell us what it looks like, where it was located and how you dealt with it.

Finally, watch the demo mode. It's self-teaching (it learns from its mistakes) and if you leave it running for a couple of hours, you can see how a real expert would play! However, the most enjoyable way of learning to play is working it out for yourself.





Track Attractors at high altitude, and don't let them get on your tail, otherwise you could end up engaged in a deadly tug o' war, as above.



Factory islands and the Base island produce limited quantities of resources.

Regularly move the Stockpile island, so that it is always within range of the group of islands that you are currently mounting your campaign against.

Place defence islands of key positions in the island network, so that it is more difficult for the enemy carrier to break the network chain.

Always repair Mantas and Walruses as soon as they return to the Carrier.

Only refuel Mantas and Walruses with as much fuel as will be required for each sortie. That way, if they are destroyed, you will not waste fuel.

To move more quickly between islands, dock all drones, and do not leave a Manta on the flight deck, as this slows the Carrier's maximum speed.

When you send your Carrier to another island, don't forget to recall all Walruses and Mantas to the Carrier (unless they're in range of a Manta with a Comms Pod).

When travelling between islands, use the available time to redesignate the settings in the Set Priorities screen.

Always keep your Mantas and Walruses fully armed, even when in the Hangar, as you will be able to fit more supplies in the Carrier's Stores.

Make use of the head-up Radar facility available on Mantas and Walruses. You will be able to spot incoming enemy missiles more easily.

On reaching an enemy island, immediately launch a full complement of defence drones.

Before you reach an enemy island, send out a Manta as a reconnaissance scout, and make a note of the positions of installations on the island.

Zoom in on the bottom right-hand corner of the map to maximum magnification...

DUNGEON MASTER

FTL/Mirrorsoft

Richard Corns of Kingswinford, Swindon has some handy hints which should help you complete this excellent game.

In dungeon eight (the one with the rats) there's a message which says 'When is rock not rock'. To the left of this message you can walk through the wall to get to a passage which has an invisible teleporter. Locate the concealed entrance by walking down the wall and throwing objects. When an item disappears, you've found the entrance. Walk sideways and turn about. A giant rat appears but it can be dispatched using full-power fireballs.

Later on in the dungeon there's a concealed button. Find and press it to activate a Storm Ring which shoots lightning. At the end of the dungeon there's a Ra. Don't leave without it.

In dungeon ten there's a corridor which goes round in a circle. To get past it walk around throwing objects at the wall. When an object disappears, turn around and walk back the way you came and you find yourself in a different location. Keep doing this to find your way out. When you've found a way out, back around carefully to find a door. Open it to find a sword called The Fury which can shoot fireballs.

Near the steps which lead down from this dungeon there's a door – it's vital that you enter it. On the wall there's an eye. Take an object and click it on the eye to open a secret passageway. Enter and you're transported to the Ruby Key. This must be used in the Tomb of the Firestaff.

In dungeon eleven there's a Ra Key and the Master Key which is used to open the Firestaff door. Be careful here, as the dungeon is full of knights in chain mail which are very difficult to destroy.

When you've got both keys, go downstairs. There's a Wizard here, but don't pursue him as he's far too powerful to beat at the moment. Don't open the skeleton hole here – if you opened one on level seven, you get transported all the way back there.

Go to the Firestaff – you should be able to open all the doors with the Ruby Key – and open the door that says 'Enter With Caution'. Search around and you should be able to find a button. Go down the passage that appears and carefully check the left hand side. There's another button there; press it and go back to the first button, and nearby you should discover a door. Open it and enter. On one of the walls there's an altar with ash on it, beneath which is a key. There's also a button located in the room; press it to get a Ra key and scrolls which tell you about the staff. Four doors can be opened with the ashkey, and behind each one is a magical item.

Use the Ra key found in the altar room to open the door with the star-shaped keyhole. Explore behind the door to find the Firestaff (it's behind the black door which is opened with the Master key).

Go back to the level with the Wizard to find youself in the dragon room. Under a pile of ash is a key. Pick it up, but be careful because if the dragon breathes fire, the entire party will be instantly frazzled.

Behind the door in the dragon room is a power gem. To free it from the spell use ZO + KATH + RA + XXXXXXXXXXXX. This produces a crystal with which you can touch the gem.

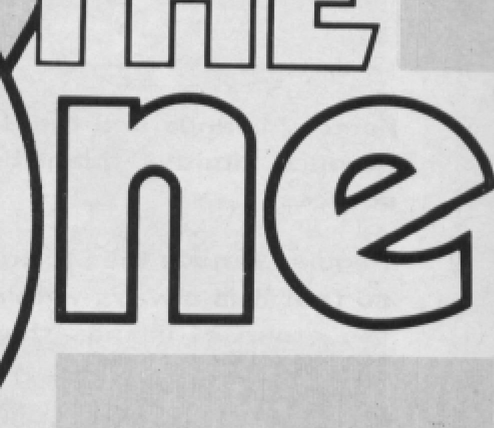
Go up the stairs to the room with the Wizard. Be extremely cautious here, as the room is packed with demons, and there's fire everywhere. Destroy all the demons and then face the Wizard himself. Surround him with flux-cages, and when you're sure that he's COMPLETELY surrounded, invoke a fuse, stand right next to him and use the fuse. If you surrounded him correctly, he dies and the quest is over.

GAUNTLET II

US Gold

The easiest way of accessing the secret room is by collecting super shots. Don't pick them up until you've completely cleared a dungeon, then retrace your steps, pick up the super shots and go to the exit – without pressing the fire button. Keep this up to enter the room.

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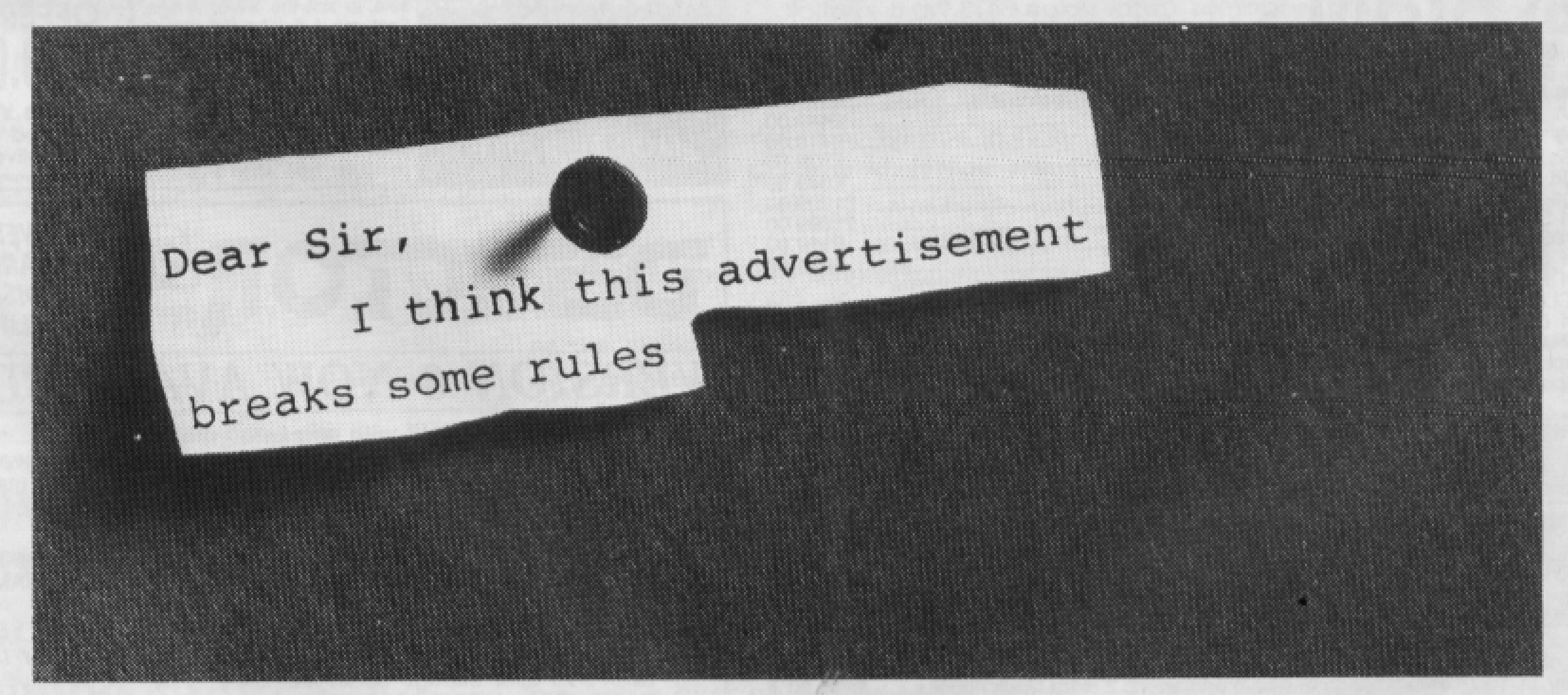
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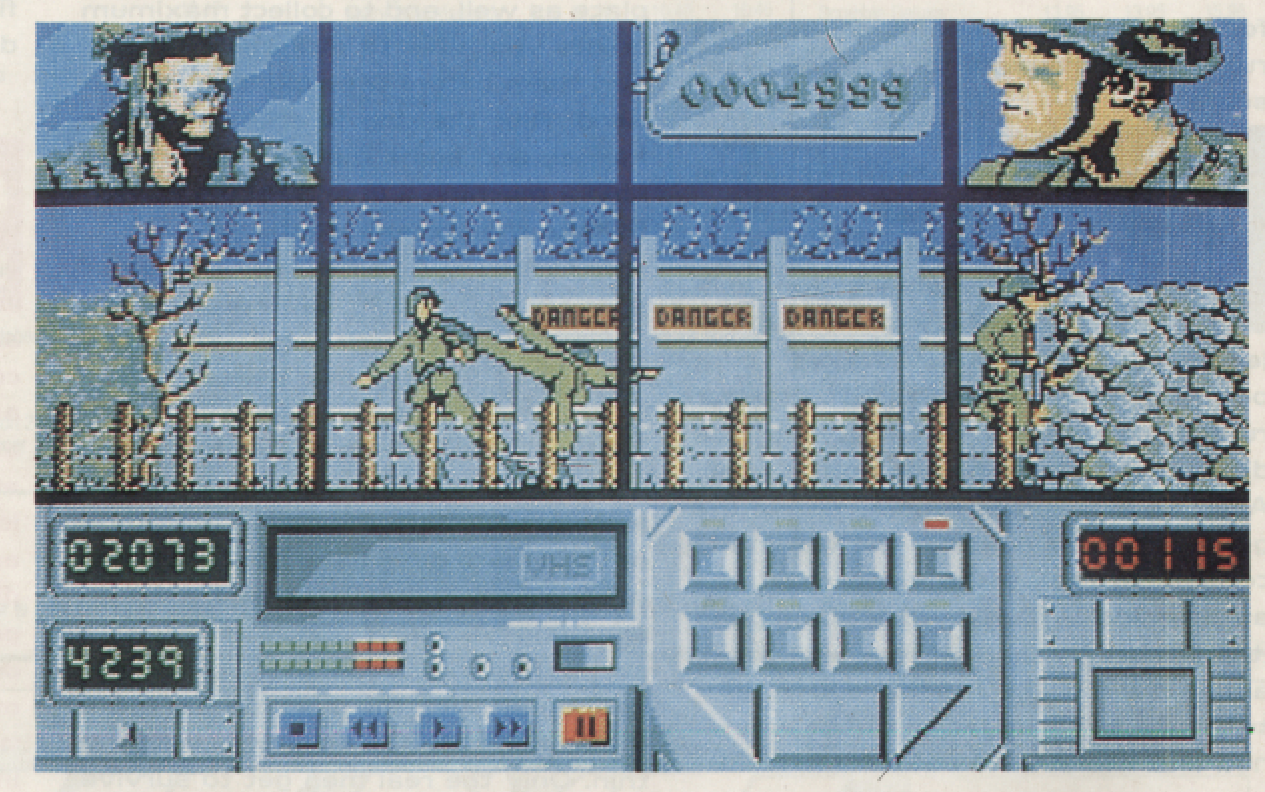
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Action Service



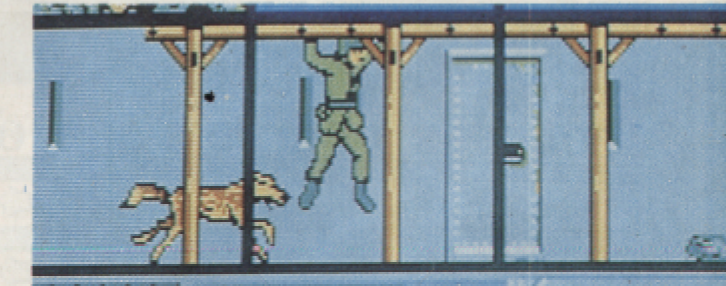
It's gruelling out there, training to be a Cobra Force Commando. Attempt three training missions, or design your own course to test yourself to the limit, but remember to do your best – every move is videoed from the Command Post. Infogrames' Action Ser-vice is much more than a Combat School clone. Graeme Kidd reports from the training camp.



They don't take namby-pambies or wimps in Cobra Command. If you want to join you have really got to prove yourself. The sideways-scrolling assault courses on which you *could* qualify as a member of the elite is viewed from the comfort of a high-tech, eight screen video console at HQ. Your soldier makes his way through the gruelling terrain on the bottom four screens of the display while the CO shouts his orders from a screen at the top right.

Course One is fairly straightforward. Scamper along, jumping over objects hidden in the grass, scaling walls, bounding over obstacles and shuffling through crawlways on your tum. But listen out for the CO's orders – if he demands press-ups you'd better get on your face and give him five pretty quick. Dive to the ground when he calls out an air alert, or bullets from the sky will rip and ruin your designer camo. Then there's Rex, battle-dog extraordinaire with teeth as sharp as razors – leap onto an overhead way and move

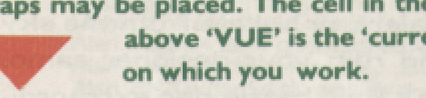
Barky the dog snaps at Clive's ankles as he swings arm-over-arm along the poles. Clive's clocked up 2,139 points so far...



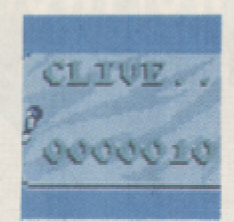
forward hand-over-hand or Rex will ruin your trousers and trash your score.



Scoring is quite straightforward – you collect points for making progress and even more points for successfully achieving objectives or tasks. Mistakes cost points, which are knocked off your running total, and to begin with it's difficult to hold on to any points at all. After an attempt at running one of the gauntlets, you can use the command console to replay the video that was automatically filmed while you legged it down the track. Fast forward, pause and slow-motion modes allow your triumphs and tribulations to be examined and analysed in detail.



Construction screen, made up of numbered, vertical 'cells' into which scenery, objects and traps may be placed. The cell in the middle, above 'VUE' is the 'current' cell on which you work.



The second course on the training menu gets a bit risky – you have to start messing around with explosives. Mines are hidden under tufts of grass, and a careful lookout has to be maintained to avoid being the star attraction of a pyrotechnic display. Grenades are scattered around the place as well, and to collect maximum points you have to pick them up and hurl them before they explode in your hand. Rex the dog is still out of his kennel, and some maniac has got behind a machine gun and thinks it's fun to rake the ground around you...



And for afters, you get the ultimate test. Tough guys who have already passed their physical exams and joined the Cobra Command are waiting to give rookies hell as they negotiate the obstacles. Some of these hard guys have machine guns, while others are unarmed and insist on engaging you in a punch-up. By this stage, Rex has been getting hungry, the maniac with the machine gun more manic and the CO's temper is wearing thin. Only the real men get to survive the third combat course.

Once you've mastered the three-stage training, you can go on to develop an assault course or two to your own design.

Entering the construction mode gives you total control over the placement of scenery, obstacles, traps and hazards. Create a course and you can save it to disk for later use. Designer training comes of age...



and you can torture your friends on fiendish training missions of your own design.

ST The video console concept, with the playback facility, sets Action Service a few pegs above other Decathlon-inspired army training games. The action is compelling enough to test the mettle of any arcade-inspired would-be soldier, and the sound effects add to the atmosphere of sweat and effort. Blood lovers will be disappointed, however, as your soldier refuses to die or be dismembered no matter how tough the going gets. And even if you get thoroughly expert at all three on-board missions, the construction kit is rewarding to use in its own right allowing hundreds and hundreds of infinitely varied courses to be created for your entertainment. Action Service is to assault course simulations as Macadam Bumper is to pinball games. Hours of fun...

PRICE:	£19.95
RELEASE DATE:	September
GRAPHICS	68%
SOUND	72%
PLAYABILITY	70%
VALUE	62%

OVERALL 69%



Development on the Amiga and PC versions of Action Service is now underway in France. Infogrames in the UK has a provisional release date of mid-September for release across all formats. By then it will probably be the ST game on sale with the others following sometime in October. No news yet on any variations in game design or play. Stay tuned...



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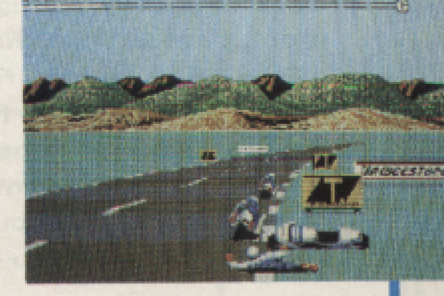


Hang-On

After almost a year-long wait, Sega's classic coin-op has finally made its way onto the ST, courtesy of Electric Dreams. Gary Whitta dons his leathers and puts his joystick into gear...

The high speed thrills of motorcycle racing are something that ST owners have never had the chance to experience... until now. Super Hang-On offers all the best elements of Enduro Racer and OutRun all rolled into one, plus much more besides.

There's a choice of four courses to race over, each on its own continent and of varying length and level of difficulty. Selecting a track takes you onto the music selection screen where you can choose from any of four tunes to listen to while you race; a novel feature

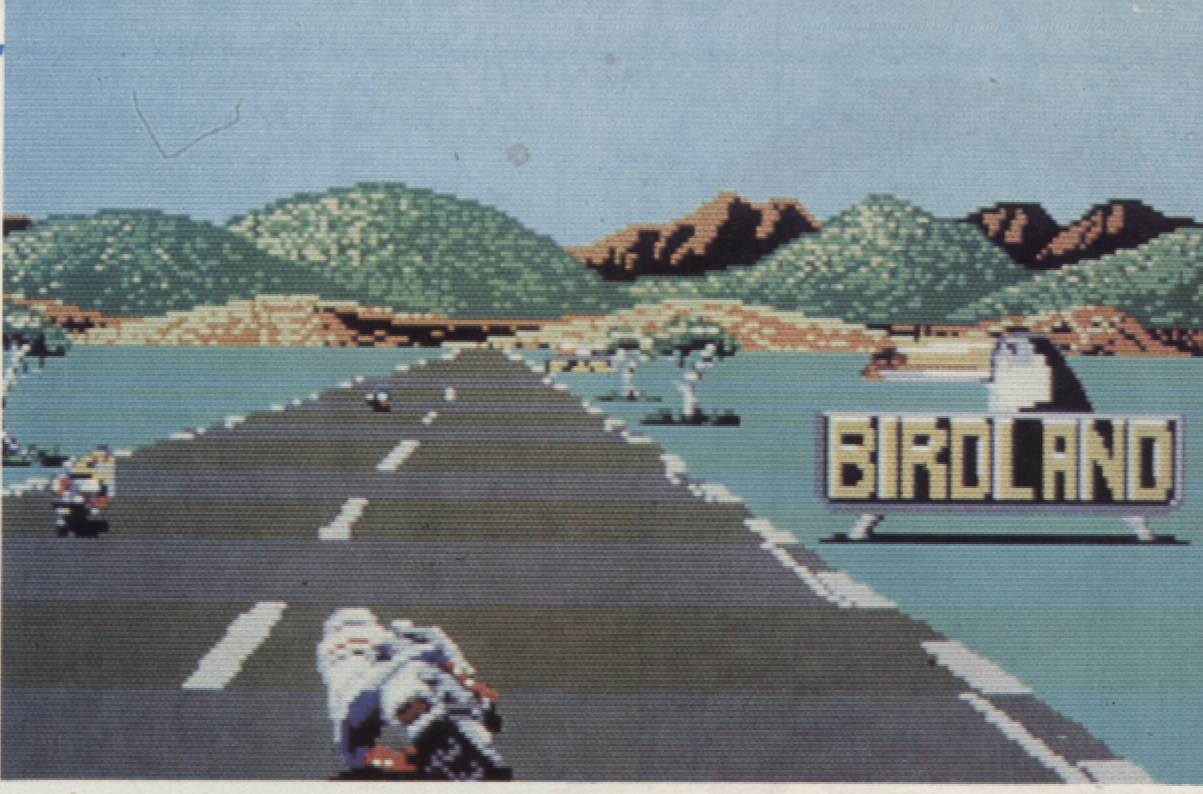


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and one that was sadly omitted in the ST conversion of **OutRun**. The race begins at the starting line, and after a three second countdown you're off. A stage is completed simply by reaching the checkpoint gate within the allocated time limit. To show exactly how far you are from the next checkpoint, a course map is displayed at the top of the screen, and a white line snakes along slowly to show your progress.

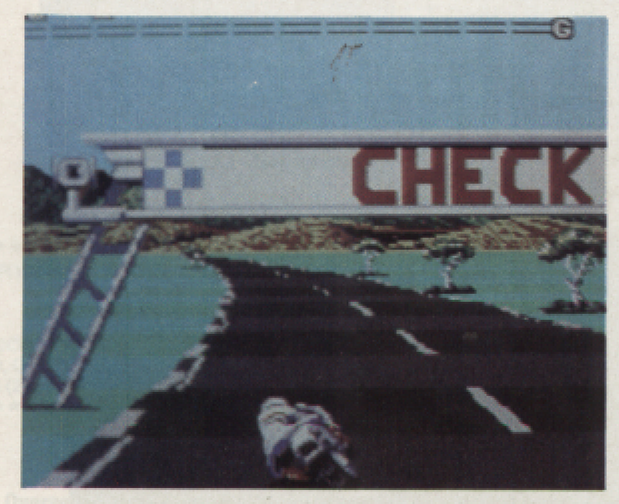
The bike's standard maximum speed is 280kmh, and when you reach this, the speedometer flashes red indicating that the Nitro Injector is ready for activation. Pressing and holding down the fire button activates the nitro, boosting your speed to a breath-taking 324kmh! However, at speeds as high as this, it can be difficult to keep the bike on the road, so it's necessary to exercise some restraint with the nitro as you go round corners. Not doing so causes the bike to slide off the side of the road and crash into one of the roadside obstacles, wasting valuable time. Another threat to your success comes from the other bikers on the road. As you reach maximum speed, other bikes begin to get in the way; crashing into one of them isn't fatal but slows the bike right down, and so more time is lost. Reaching the chequered flag in the face of all these obstacles is no mean feat, and doing so results into any remaining time being transferred into points and added on to produce a final course score which can then be saved to disk.



With your speed approaching 280kmh, prepare to hit the Nitro Injector button and scream down the track at a breath-taking 324kmh! The exhilarating sense of speed in this quite wonderful conversion of Super Hang-On is something that, sadly, these stills cannot possibly convey

CHOOSE YOUR CLASS WITH ACCELERATE

The course selection screen where you determine your level of skill and length of race – from a brief six-stage beginner's burn-up through Africa to a gruelling 18-stage expert run across Europe.



ST Electric Dreams and ZZKJ have done a marvellous job of converting Super Hang-On. It's by far and away the best racing game to appear on the ST and makes OutRun and Super Cycle both look positively primitive in comparison. The graphics are nothing short of spectacular and really are almost identical to the coin-op original, generating a real sense of speed. Unlike OutRun, the hills and bends really are convincing. Sound has been implemented very well indeed. There's an excellent loading theme, more than adequate FX and four pleasant in-game tunes, although the title screen music is a bit depressing and slow. But where Super Hang-On really scores is in the gameplay stakes. It manages to generate a feeling of exhilaration never encountered in any other racing game outside of the arcades. It's also very user-friendly, allowing mouse or joystick control, the facility to load and save high scores and even an option to change the scan rate of the game, giving two different sizes of graphics! Super Hang-On is just great, easily the best arcade conversion yet.

PRICE:	£19.99
RELEASE DATE:	Out now
GRAPHICS	83%
SOUND	69%
PLAYABILITY	84%
VALUE	75%

OVERALL 83%



Bad news – there are no plans for an Amiga version of Super Hang-On. Maybe Electric Dreams could be persuaded to do something if demand was high enough... drop them a line to let them know what you think. The address? Mediagenic, Activision House, 23 Pond Street, Hampstead, London NW3 2PN.

Where Time Stood Still



Arcade game or adventure? Black and white graphics on a colour monitor? Most odd. Ocean's latest epic from Denton Designs is a strange game in many ways... as Graham Taylor found out when he journeyed through a land Where Time Stood Still...

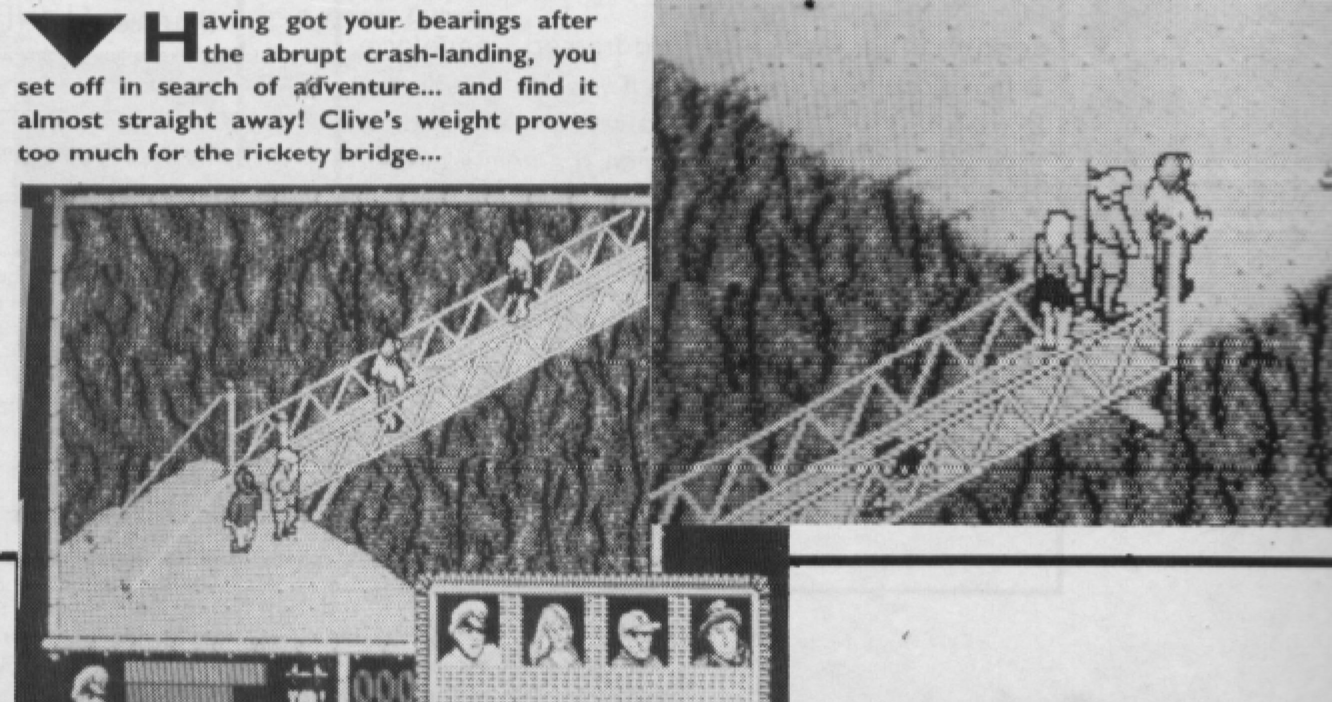
Have Denton Designs gone mad? This game is in black and white! Actually it's for a very good reason. Much the same reason, in fact, that some films are in black and white – atmosphere, and, that most rare of qualities, style. **Where Time Stood Still** is a *very* stylish game.

The plot sounds as if it's lifted from some creaky old movie, **The Land That Time Forgot**, or something like that. Four characters crash land on a rocky plateau and meet untold dangers as they desperately seek a way out, a pilot, the Bogart-alike called Jarrett, sweet newly-weds Gloria and Dirk and fat fool Clive.

This characterisation goes beyond mere disk liner notes, as the four personalities actually behave in character, and understanding this is a genuinely important part of the game. For example, what always happens in adventure films when fat hopeless people try to cross dodgy wooden bridges? (Hope you picked the rope up...)

Thus the black and white is part of the *style* of the game, it's supposed to remind you of old movies. And the effect works, at times the screen is almost like a pencil drawing, with deft use of shading and highlighting to give life to the background graphics.

Despite the fact that the entire game can be played with mouse control (more or less) you soon realise that although **Where Time Stood Still** looks like an arcade game it actually plays more like an adventure. True, there are



▼ Having got your bearings after the abrupt crash-landing, you set off in search of adventure... and find it almost straight away! Clive's weight proves too much for the rickety bridge...

Time d Still

plenty of sections where you need arcade-type skills — guiding the characters along the marshes for example, but for the most part you have to solve puzzles and figure out the correct uses for objects. Rescuing Clive, who gets into trouble about one minute into the game requires a bit of thought but no dexterity at all.

There may be a problem for some people, as this is a game which can be completed completely, and I doubt you'd really have a good reason to want to do it twice. That said, though, doing it once is going to take a lot of brainpower and effort... If you like your challenges a little more cerebral you'll love this game. Arcade bash-heads may be put off.

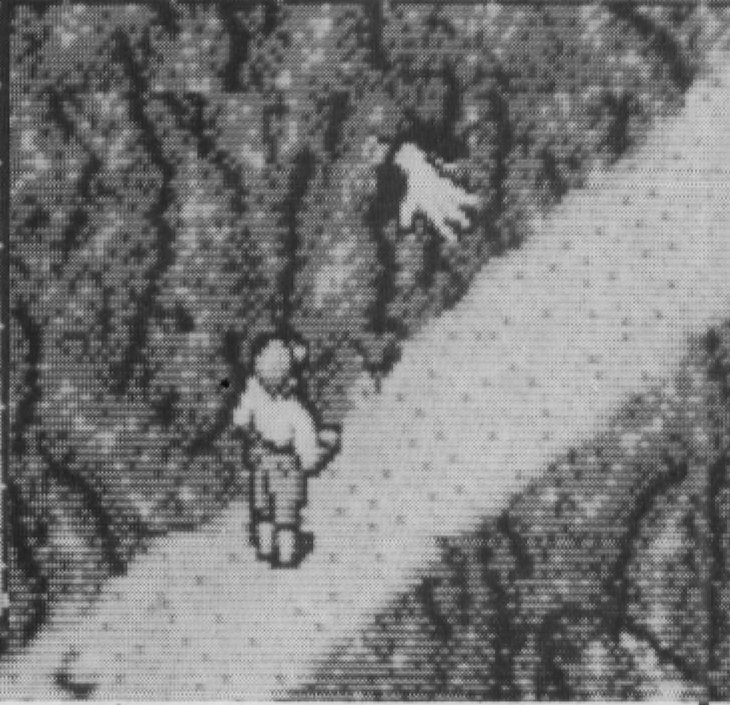


THE CHARACTERS

JARRET: Pretty much your standard Bogart/ Indiana Jones hero. Thinks he doesn't need anybody else but does. The leader of the party unless killed, he is chief tough guy and problem solver and without him you'll find the going pretty tough.

Jarret was in need of a hand – and it looks like he's found one. Sadly it's not what you'd call a helping hand...

The reptilian inhabitants of this long-forgotten land like a cuddle – much to the dismay of Jarret, whose cry for help falls on deaf ears.

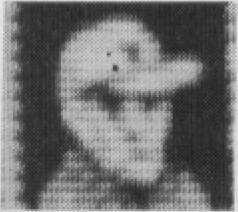


Team leader Jarret gets accosted by the locals while taking a trek along a hazardous mountain pathway. The natives are quite talkative – it's a pity they don't seem to speak the same language! Where's Dirk when you need him, eh?

GLORIA: Naff name but no bimbo this. Gloria is a bit yukky when with new husband Dirk but also finds herself attracted to Jarret. Although she is a problem in that her need for food and rest is possibly only exceeded by Clive, don't be tempted to just ignore her. At least one puzzle in this game is virtually impossible to solve without her.



CLIVE: Fat, foolish, and totally useless — or so it seems. He whines, demands food, and constantly endangers the rest of the party. There is this terrible temptation to just lead him over a cliff or sacrifice him to some passing monster... maybe you shouldn't.



DIRK: Athletic and bright but goes seriously hopeless if anything happens to Gloria. Dirk is good in a fight and, with his mastery of languages, is best at dealing with natives. This, you can be sure, is going to be vital at some point.

DANGERS

There are lots as you would expect.

Mazes: Both the mountains, and more especially the marshes are tortuous mazes. The real problem is that wrong turnings waste time and mean more food and drink supplies will be used up.

Monsters: Prehistoric nasties swoop and slurp all over the place, some are easily avoided but others, particularly in the marshlands are very difficult to get past.

Natives: Very dangerous, keen on human sacrifice and hard to do business with, and yet you must find them to complete the game.

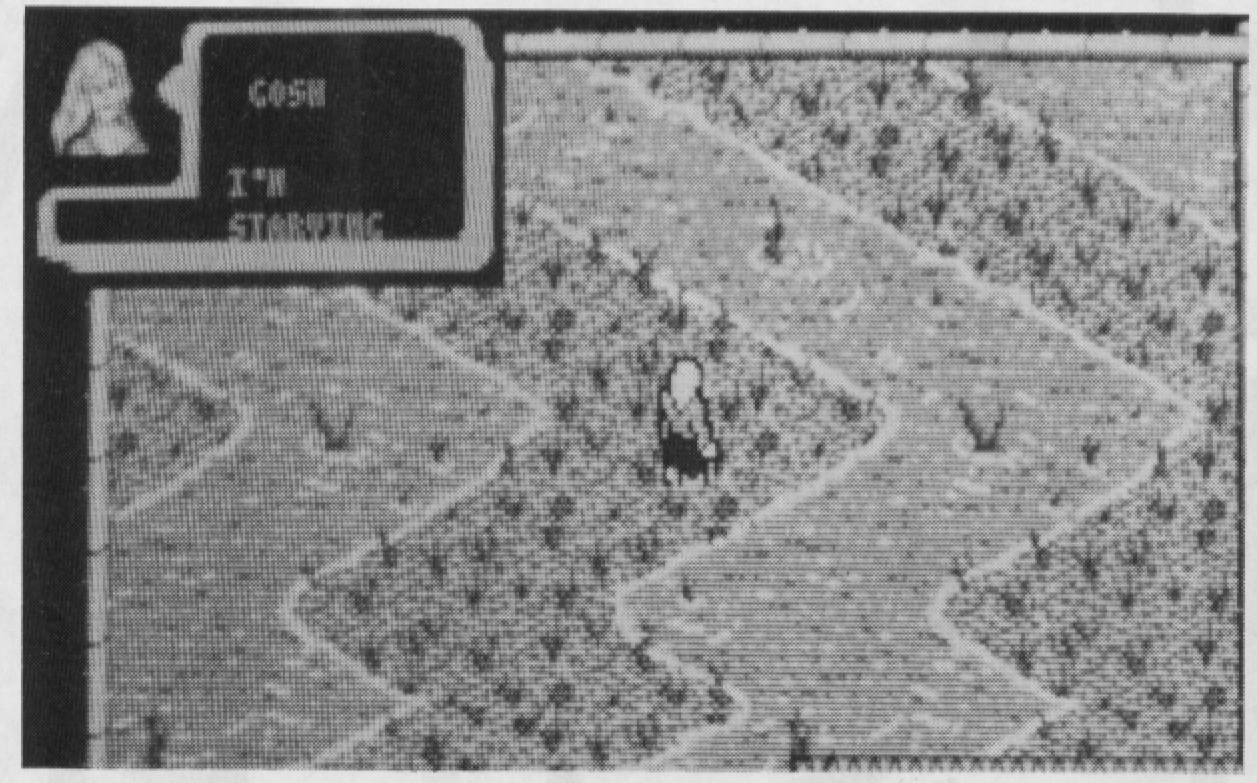
Natural Hazards: Marshes are boggy. Rocks crumble and old wooden bridges are not very safe.

PLAYING WHERE TIME STOOD STILL

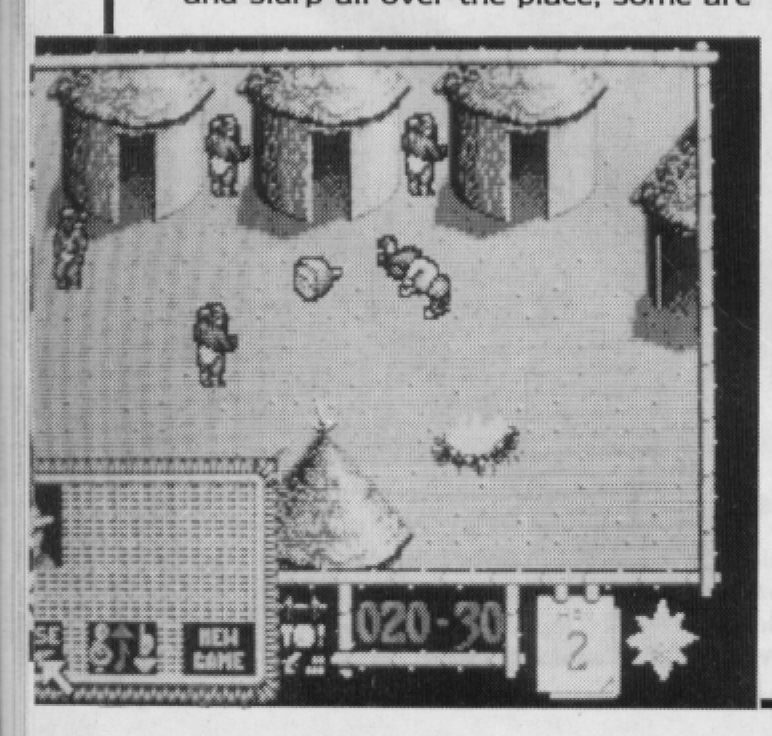
Mouse or joystick control. In movement mode you merely guide Jarret across the landscape and the other characters follow — assuming they aren't tired or hungry or dead. Make sure everyone has caught up before pressing on.

Objects are found scattered around the game and some characters already have objects on startup. There is no written description of objects held, each is represented visually on a character 'control' window you may call up at any time. A couple are a bit difficult to recognise but mostly this works fine.

In this mode characters may be instructed to pick up or drop an object or USE ITEM. No more need be specified, the computer understands the most logical use for the item in context.



Lost in the maze-like swampland, Gloria's in need of some nosh. But the only meat she's likely to get her teeth into around here is a venomous water-snake and that's more than likely to bite back. Bear in mind, there's only one safe route through the swamp, so it's advisable to make a map.



Jarret collapses in front of a tasty-looking leg of ham – which is best used elsewhere.



The sound is nothing to write home about – just a few bleeps when using the control screen and a simplistic tune at other times. But aesthetics aside, Where Time Stood Still offers sufficient complexity and depth to keep most arcade adventurers content for some considerable time.

PRICE:	£19.95
RELEASE DATE:	Out now
GRAPHICS	69%
SOUND	36%
PLAYABILITY	74%
VALUE	70%

OVERALL 76%



Work is underway and this version should be complete by the time you read this. The graphics will remain in black and white, although extra shades of grey will be used to make the characters and scenery smoother still, and sound is unlikely to change drastically. Expect to see it in the shops late in September.



Denton Designs' The Great Escape has already made its way onto the PC, so there's no reason why Where Time Stood Still should suffer during the process of conversion as both games follow a similar format. A release date has yet to be fixed, but Ocean are anticipating a release before the end of the year.

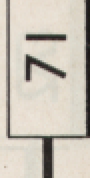
PSYGNOSIS

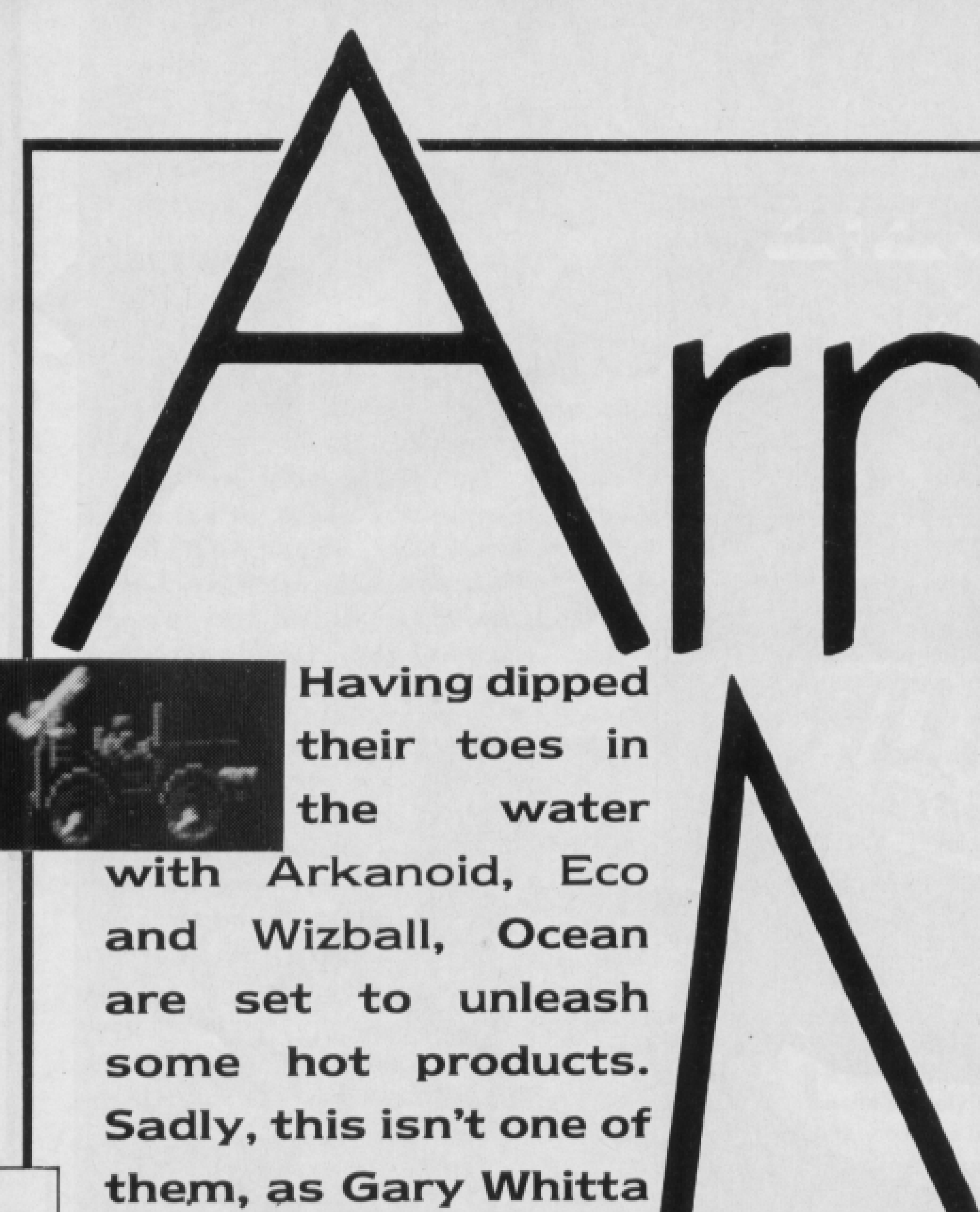
MIRROR Soft

RAINBIRD

T'R I A'D

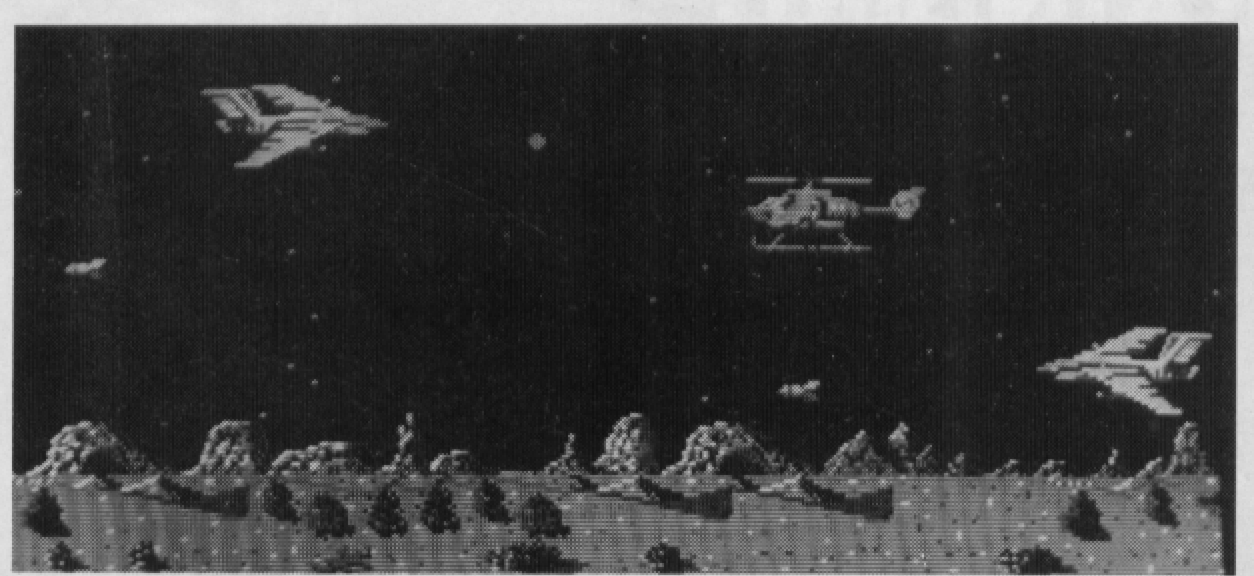
TRIAD - A NEW FORCE IN THE 16 BIT MARKET PLACE





Army Mov

Having dipped their toes in the water with Arkanoid, Eco and Wizball, Ocean are set to unleash some hot products. Sadly, this isn't one of them, as Gary Whitta discovered.



Flying across the desert terrain of the second level, with fighter planes galore attempting to bring you down. And they usually do...

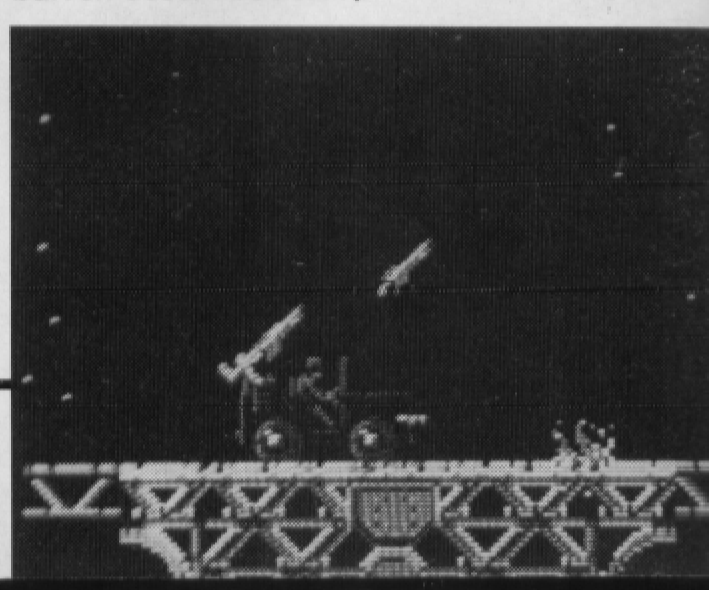
Your country needs YOU! Yes YOU! You've been selected to undertake one of the most important missions in the Second World War. As a member of the crack Special Operations Corps, you're the only person who can pull it off. Information that could help swing the balance of power in the war is locked in a safe deep behind enemy lines. Your mission is to retrieve the information.

Your objective is split into seven sections. The first asks you to take control of a jeep which must be taken across a very long bridge. Unfortunately, many sections of the bridge have been shot away leaving dangerous holes.

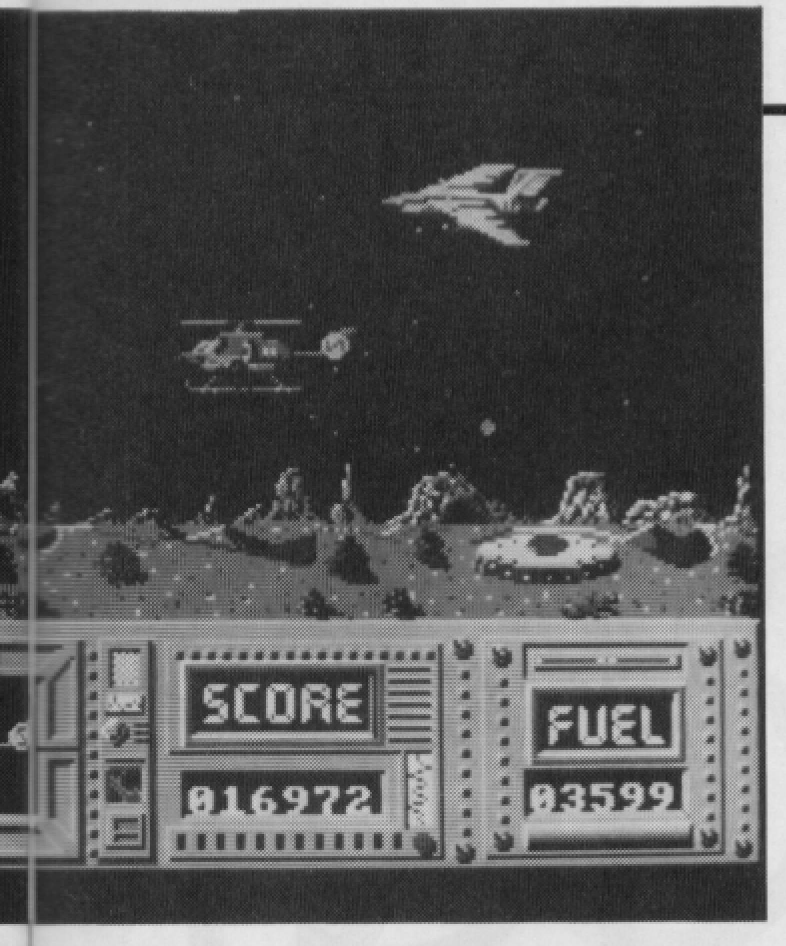
As you progress across the bridge, merrily jumping over holes, enemy forces will attack. Helicopters are the most frequent menace, firing missiles at you as they pass. If you're quick, you can accelerate and pass under the missile. Alternatively, you can jump over it. A more pre-emptive way of protecting yourself is to fire first. This is where the rear-mounted missile launcher comes in handy. By hitting the fire button you can launch three missiles in succession. You then have to wait for the launcher to reload, which takes about two seconds, before you can fire again.

Of the volley of three missiles, the first two launch into the air, knocking out any choppers in their path, while the third screams along the floor, destroying enemy trucks which crop up from time to time.

Having taken your jeep past the many dangers encountered on the bridge and making it to the hut at the end of the level, you're given a bonus before moving to the next section. The jeep is left behind and you jump into a helicopter, which has to make its way from right to left this time over more dangerous territory, starting with a barren desert backdrop.







It's not just the graphics and sound which are weak in this seven-level shoot 'em up. Gameplay is a little on the sparse side, too.

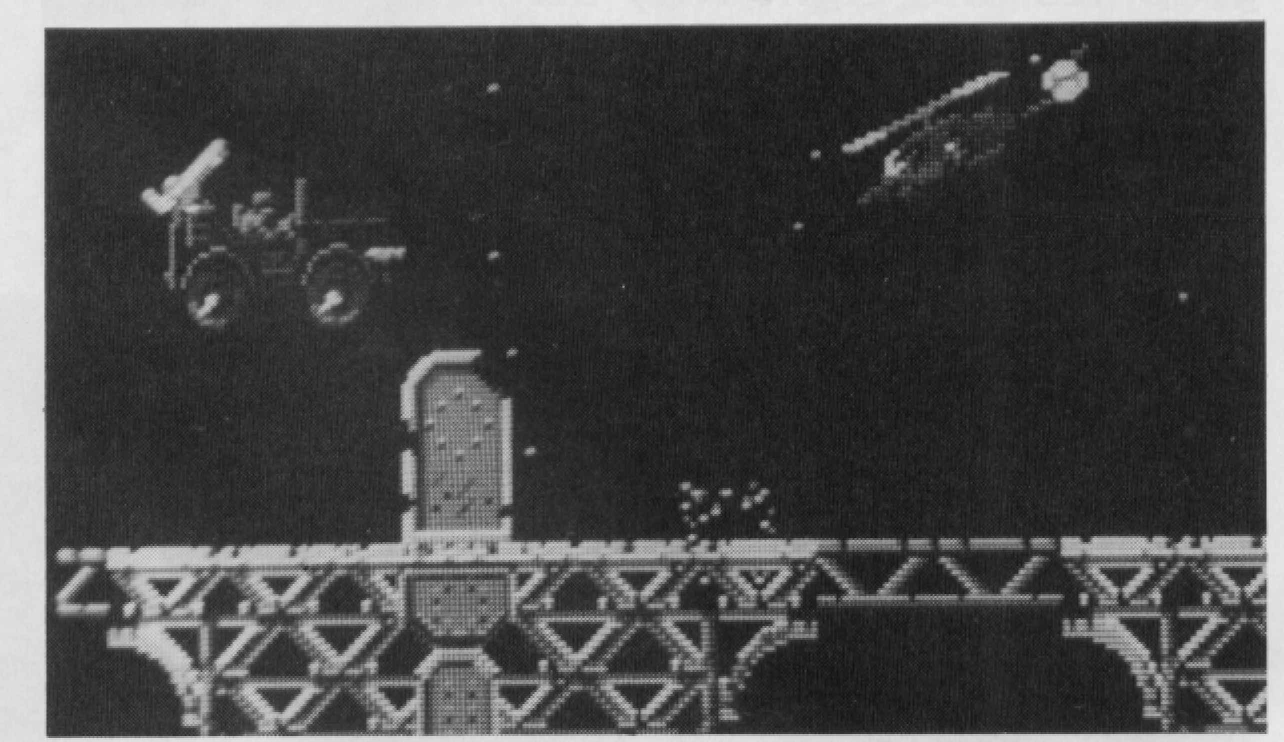
ves

The fire button again dispenses two different kinds of death. Rockets are launched from the nose of the chopper and fly horizontally, while bombs are dropped from the undercarriage to destroy enemy fighters and gun installations respectively.

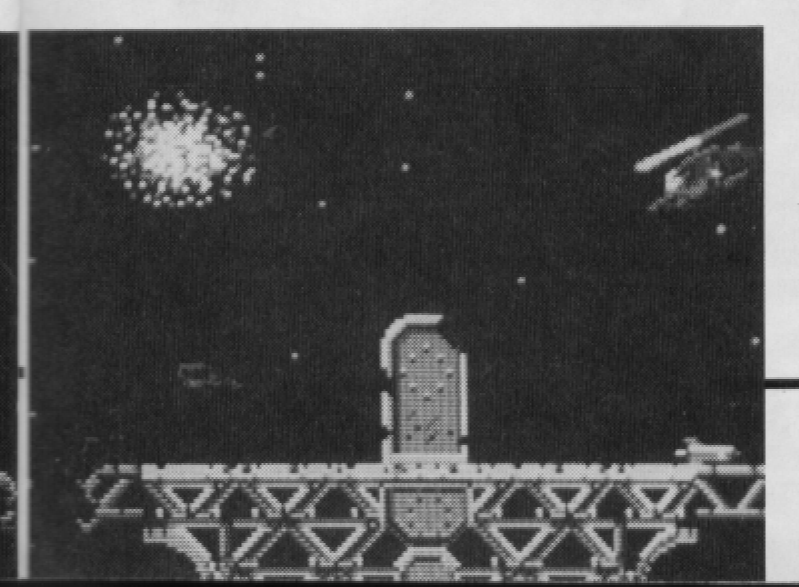
The landbased guns don't pose too much of a problem, as all they do is fire the occasional missile. The fighters, however, are a completely different kettle of fish and represent a real pain. They fly in from behind, firing like crazy, and it takes some very fast reactions to get rid of them. A quick spin over the sea follows, complete with submarines and boats to destroy.

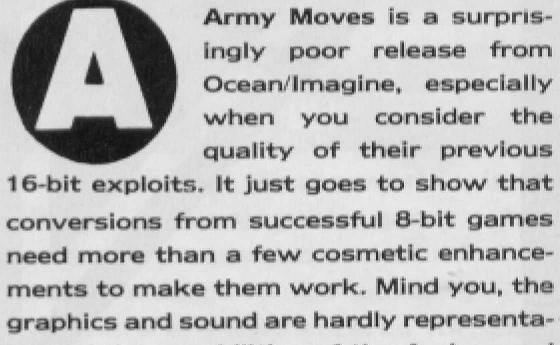
Completion of the chopper sections gives you access to the final three, all of which must be completed on foot. The first has you negotiating a dismal swamp, riddled with deadly quicksand pits, and guerillas who don't hesitate to lob grenade or two at you. Both a machine gun and a limited supply of grenades are available to you here, so you can give just as good as you get.

In Stage Five, you come across the barracks, outside the main building where the secret papers are held. More enemy soldiers and sharpshooters in watchtowers try to gun you down. But apart from the change in scenery, the gameplay is almost identical to the previous section and, indeed, the final one, where the safe and the hidden plans are located. The enemy soldiers are more ferocious here, and also appear in greater numbers. Blast your way through them, reach the safe, get the plans and the day is yours.



Guide the all singin', all dancin', rootin' tootin' jeep across the rickety bridge on Level One.





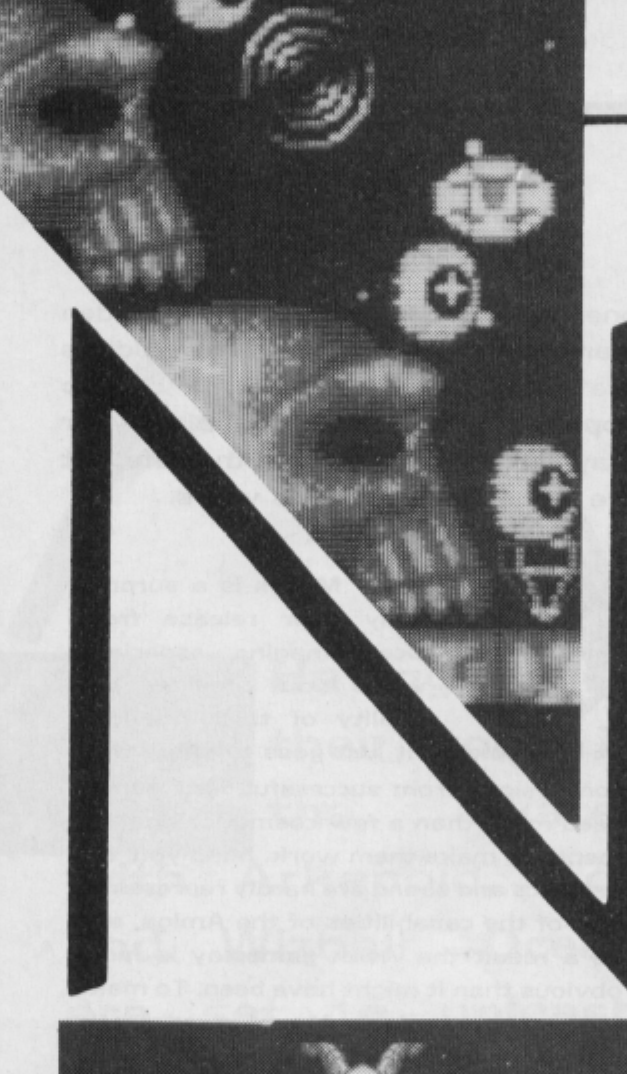
Army Moves is a surprisingly poor release from Ocean/Imagine, especially when you consider the quality of their previous 16-bit exploits. It just goes to show that conversions from successful 8-bit games need more than a few cosmetic enhancements to make them work. Mind you, the graphics and sound are hardly representative of the capabilities of the Amiga, and as a result the weak gameplay is more obvious than it might have been. To make matters worse, Army Moves is extremely difficult and frustrating, and it gets to the stage where you feel like throwing your Amiga across the room when you almost reach the end of a level only to die and have to start it again from scratch. Masochists are amply catered for here. The more discerning games players are advised to steer clear.

PRICE:	£24.95
RELEASE DATE:	Out Now
GRAPHICS	35%
SOUND	38%
PLAYABILITY	40%
VALUE	25%
OVERALL	**36%**



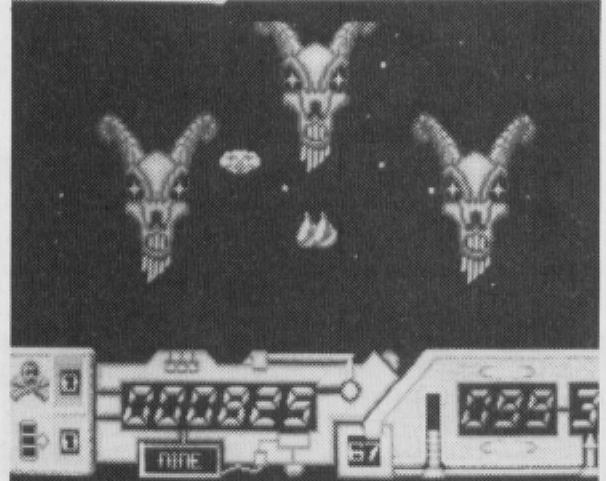
Almost identical in every aspect to the Amiga version, Army Moves on the ST also fails to make the grade. Surprisingly, both the graphics and sound seem marginally superior, with slightly better definitions on the sprites and a less irritating rendition of Colonel Bogie playing throughout. It's a shame Ocean bothered to convert Army Moves – the time would have been better spent producing some original 16-bit product. The only compensation is that Ocean should learn from this mistake and at least we can expect to see some more palatable software in the near future.

PRICE:	£19.95
RELEASE DATE:	Out Now
GRAPHICS	37%
SOUND	39%
PLAYABILITY	41%
VALUE	30%
OVERALL	**38%**



Netherw

Hewson's unusual shoot 'em up cum maze game has been converted to 16-bit by West Yorkshire programming team Imagitec. Featuring colourful graphics and eight-way scrolling, the Amiga version presented few problems. But how did the ST fare? Steve Jarratt tells all.



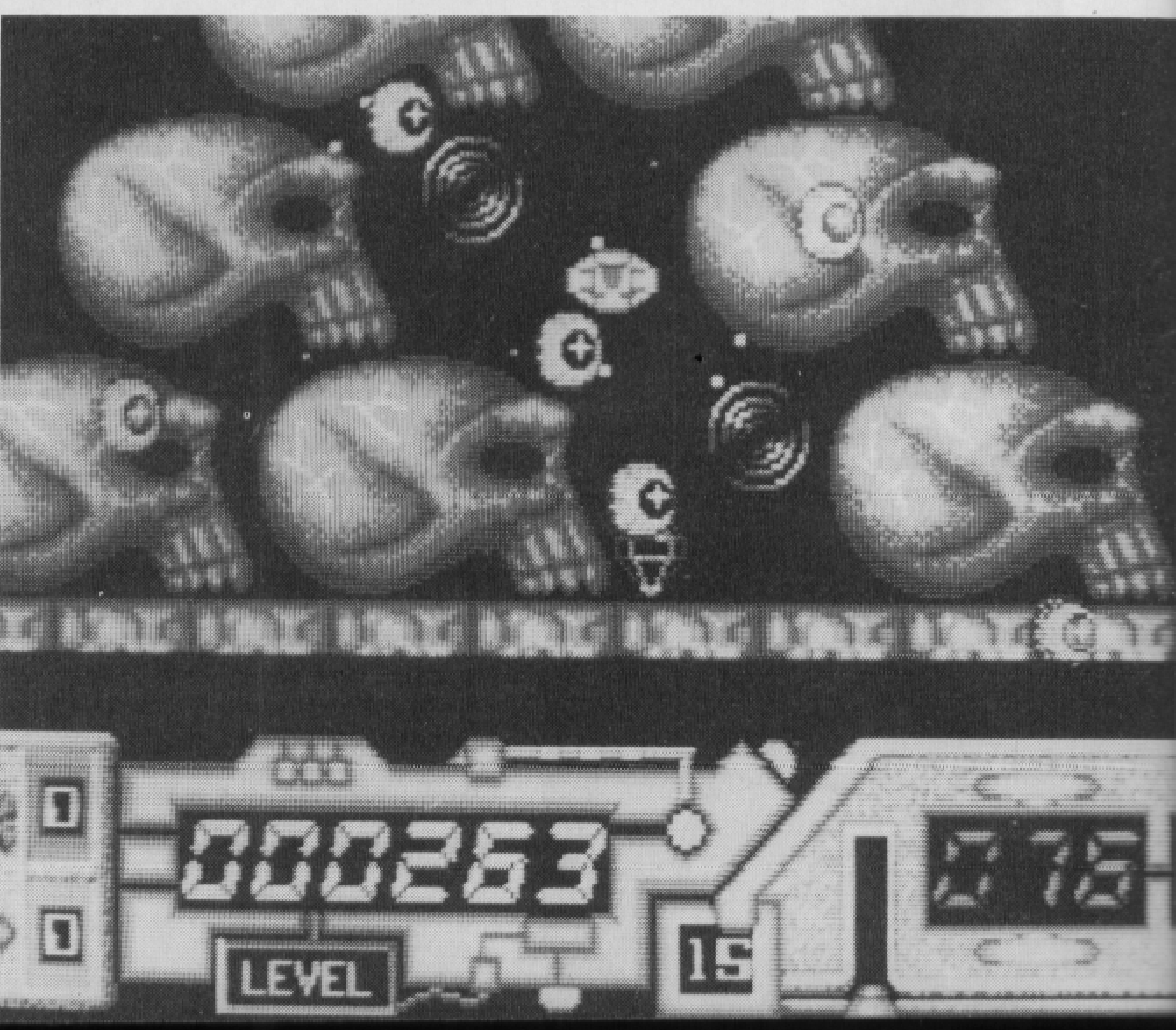
Netherworld is an alien region into which the player has stumbled; a place populated by strange and dangeous creatures. The unwitting captive must now embark upon a quest for freedom before his ships are destroyed.

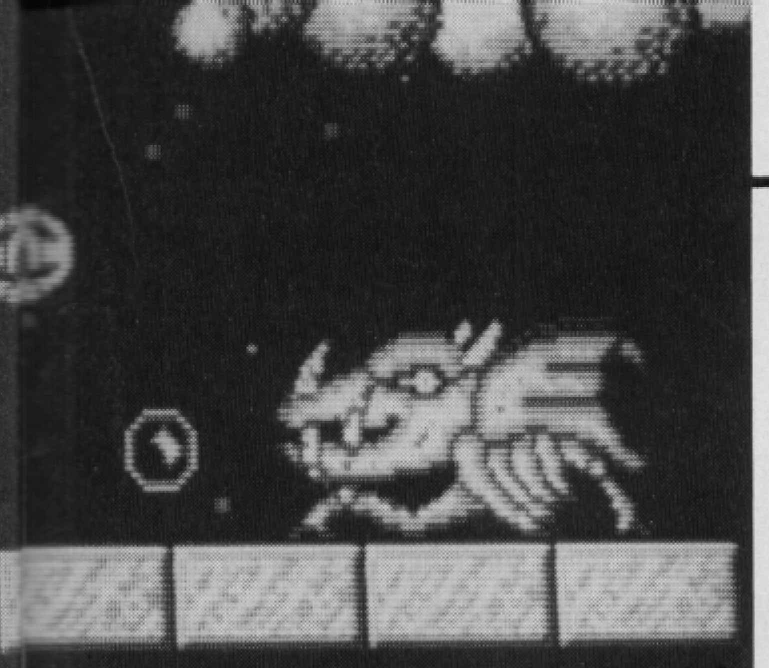
The alien system is set over 12 levels separated by intermission screens. The player's vessel is guided in one of eight directions and the landscape moves smoothly around. Movement is limited by the labyrinthine confines of each level, although a series of teleports provides easy access to other, frequently inaccessible, areas.

Release from each level is obtained upon payment in diamonds, which are scattered around the playing area. A control panel displays the number of diamonds required to secure entry to the next level.

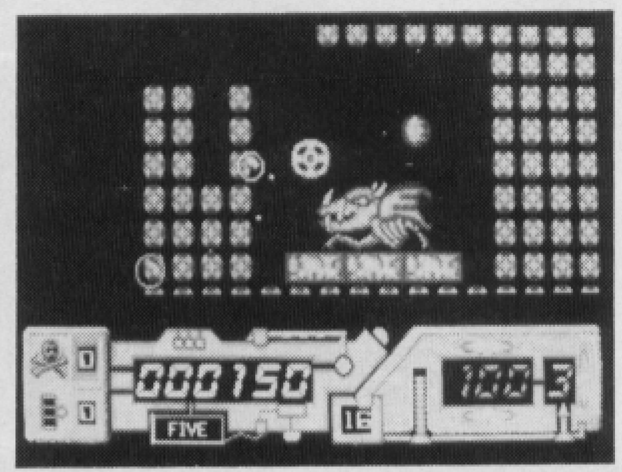
Mountains of skulls form a difficult to negotiate maze of sorts on the fifth level. The only way you can collect all the diamonds is by using the teleports (the concentric circles) dotted around the play area. ▶

Opposition is provided by a range of enemies: a variety of alien creatures are produced by generators which fire at the player. Corrosive bubbles and drops of blood are ejected by static demons and a series of floating mines

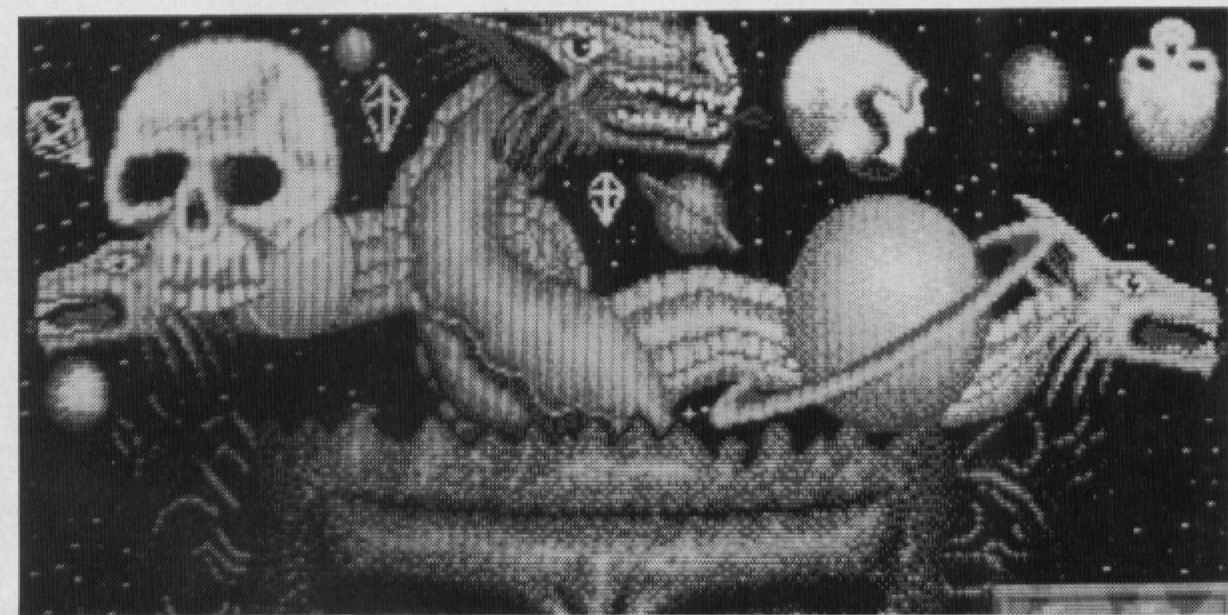




An example of the bubble-blowing gargoyles found on Level One. Shooting it results in the release of flashing icons which either help or hinder progress when collected (see panel).



world



Here's a brief run-down of some of the features found in Netherworld . . .

If the small mine is guided into a chequered block, it changes into four diamonds.

The circular teleport allows rapid movement within the landscape and to sectioned-off segments of the maze.

Collecting the hour glass adds 30 seconds to the level timer.

Skulls enable demons to be destroyed on contact.

Brick smashers allow walls to be breached on contact.

Question Marks give a surprise bonus: an extra life; limited invulnerability; temporary uncontrollable ship; temporary reversed controls.

traverse the landscape and prove harmful on contact.

Each of the player's three ships is fitted with a shield which can sustain up to 12 'hits'. Further damage results in the destruction of the current vessel.

Blasting the demons releases flashing icons which are collected for different, generally useful results.

On later levels, the number of diamonds required exceeds those available on-screen. Here, the player is forced to create the necessary gems himself. Mines can be directed into metamorphosis walls by moving rocks into their path. The same rocks can be pushed into diamond squeezers to make diamonds directly.

This process is repeated for the intermission screens which require the collection of a set amount of diamonds, although none appear on-screen. Successfully creating the desired amount is rewarded with an extra ship.

However unoriginal or derivative its main themes, Netherworld is a polished and enjoyable game which provides a pleasant blend of mindless blasting and dextrous puzzling. Cartographers are also catered for, since later levels really do need some sort of map to enable their negotiation.

The gameplay is smooth and the different elements are sufficiently addictive to hold the attention for some time.

A The Amiga Netherworld is very similar to its Atari counterpart and gameplay is practically identical. Differences occur in the graphics, which, apart from the awful loading screen, are more refined and profit from a full colour background in place of the ST's black starfield and the increased number of available colours. The sound, although clearer, is still rather poor by Amiga standards and is largely forgettable. Similarly, the few sound effects are only average.

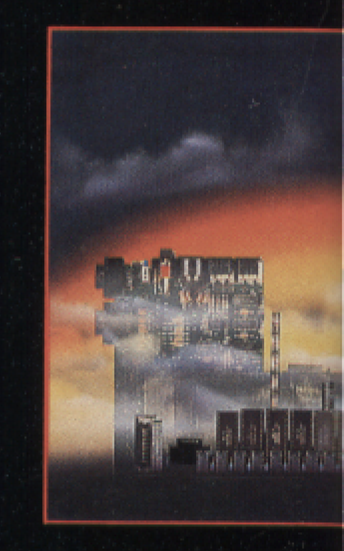


ST The surprising aspect of the ST version is that it retains the eight-way scrolling of the original. Generally regarded as difficult (if not impossible), Imagitec have managed to implement it to a very high standard. After experimenting with various routines, they settled on using preshifted graphics to create high speed scrolling. And however difficult or restrictive this method, the end result belies any problems they had. They haven't compromised the graphics either, which still consist of 8 colours on-screen, and are highly detailed and varied.

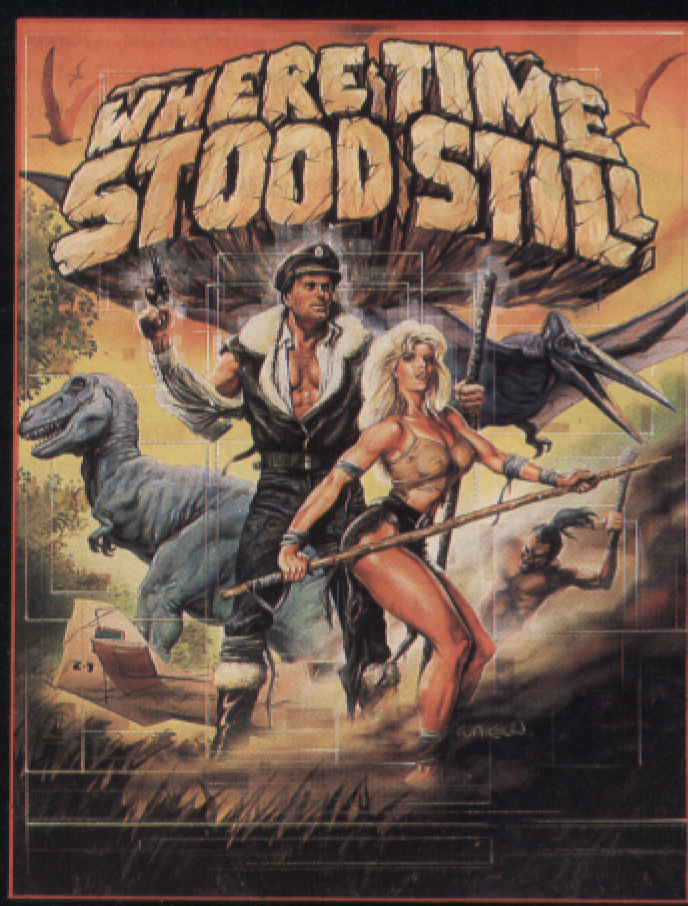
PRICE:	£19.99
RELEASE DATE:	Out Now
GRAPHICS	69%
SOUND	45%
PLAYABILITY	74%
VALUE	66%
OVERALL	**70%**

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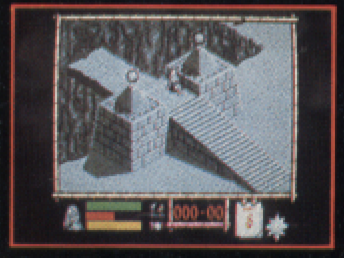


FUEL FOR EN



Your plane has ditched on a mountainous plateau somewhere in deepest Tibet. You and your companions are alive. A large shape moves toward you, you rub your eyes in disbelief; a Dinosaur! – where are you ... and when? Stunning, monochromatic 3D graphics and 4 way scrolling, give that '50's cinema mood as you learn not only to survive, but also that your companions are not all they first seemed!



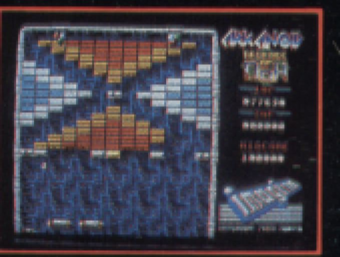


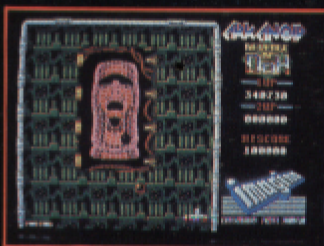
FROM





One phrase sums up the success and appeal of Arkanoid – "I'll just have another go!" Arkanoid is addictive! Using all the capabilities of the 16 bit micro this conversion is almost an exact replica with all the excitement of the original Taito coin-op smash hit. This is Arkanoid – the blockbuster.





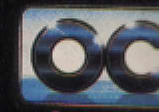
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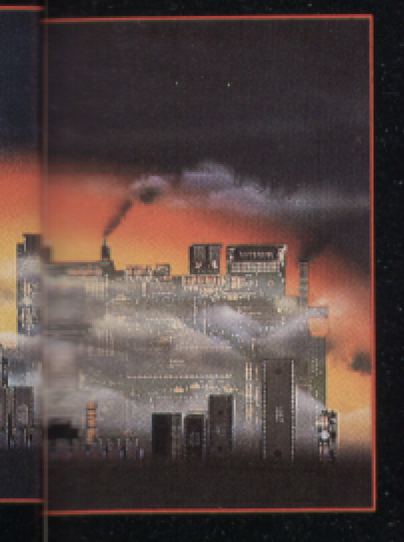
Exceptional graphics, innovative game design and digitised sound all add up to recreate the atmosphere generated in the bo office smash hit. Closely following the original storyline you take your platoon, selecting individua men for assignment, who will encounter the enemy and their many booby traps as you seek to find the enemy's underground headquarters. On entering the warren of tunnels you will need flares and a keen eye – your enemy will lunge at you, from beneath the waters which flood the tunnel floor, wielding vicious knives – the atmosphere itself is enough to kill!

FROM





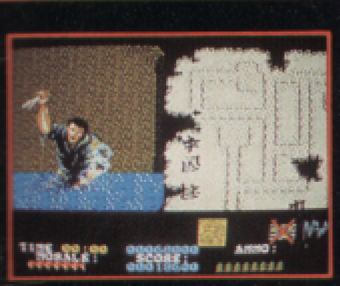
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NTERTAINMENT









DALEY IS BACK Enter the 1988 Olympic Challenge with Daley Thompson as you 'work out' in the gym, where your efforts will directly affect your performance in the competition itself – another first from Ocean.

Ten Olympic events include Long Jump, Shotput, High Jump, 100m Sprint, 400m, 110m Hurdles, Discus, Pole Vault, Javelin and 1500m. You will need all your skills to build on what you hope was, an impressive work-out, and, as is necessary for all top flight athletes, your judgement to select the most effective equipment for each event is now vital – a decision which can win or lose you a place on the podium.

This isn't just another sports simulation, this is a Daley Thompson 'event' where all his talent and humour burst through to make a thrilling and enter taining game play for all the family. Go for the Olympic Challenge!

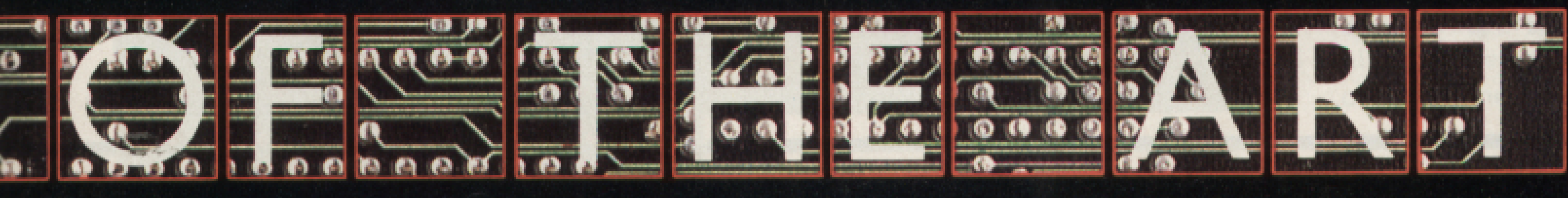
FROM











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StarR

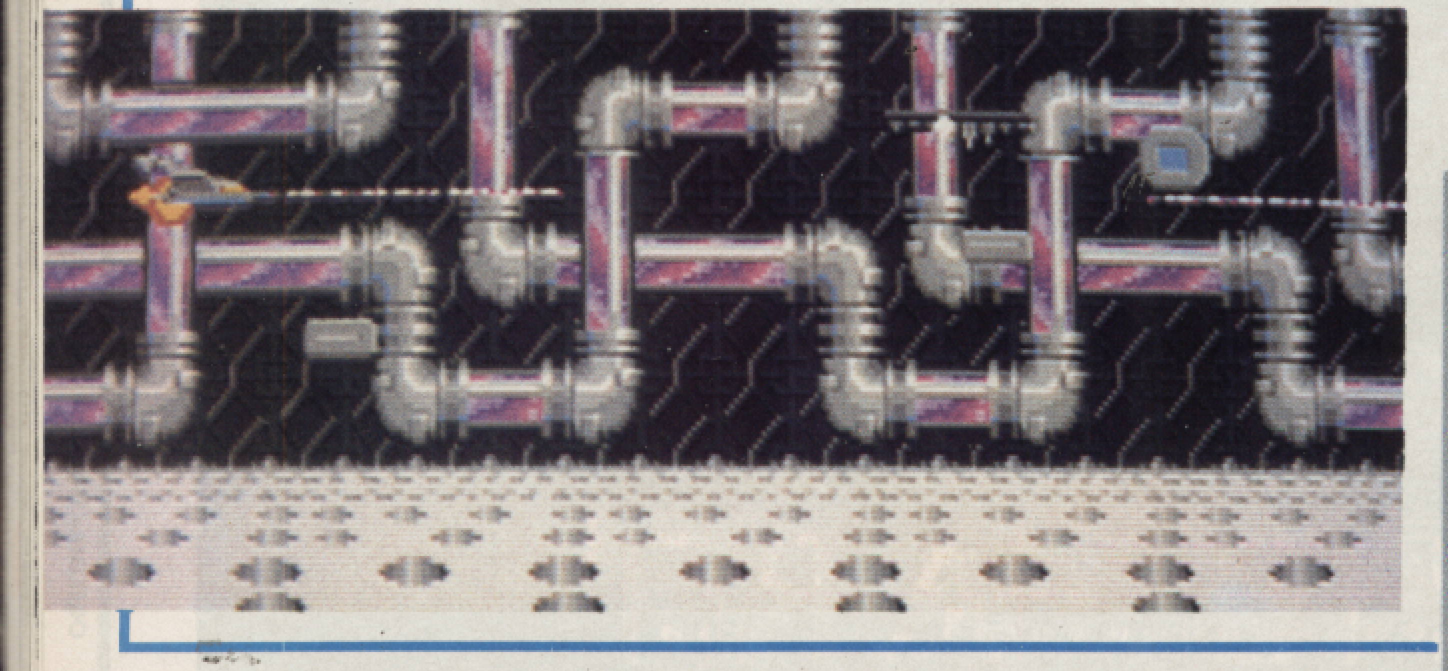
Williams' timeless coin-op classic Defender has often been imitated but never surpassed. Or has it? Logotron's StarRay is a slick adaptation of the age-old formula, and Gary Whitta is the man with his fingers on the buttons...

There can hardly be a games enthusiast who has never heard of **Defender**. It may not have spawned as many clones as more recent games such as **Gauntlet** or **Arkanoid**, but the original concept remains one of the most innovative and playable in history. The basic idea of skimming over a line-drawn landscape shooting miniscule aliens and rescuing tiny one-colour humanoids may not sound like classic game design, but the fact that there were FIVE key controls to master (the joystick was only used for up and down) meant one hell of a challenge for even the most hardened gamers.

Now 16-bit owners who never experienced the phenomenon first time round can try for themselves what is best described as **Defender '88**. StarRay takes the original framework of Defender and brings it up to date utilising the power that 16-bit machines have to offer. The scenario (for what it's worth) casts you in the role of a starship pilot, just out of combat academy and assigned to your first mission. In control of the latest StarRay space fighter, you must thwart the impending attack by an evil race of aliens who plan to cause as much trouble as possible on seven planets.

That rather lame plot is the excuse for 28 levels of pure frenetic blasting action, pitching you against a never ending supply of aliens. Each level, or planet, houses ten installations that provide all the power for the planet. The alien's mission is to raid these installations by landing on them, and sucking all the power.

Your StarRay fighter is equipped with two different types of weaponry. A laser cannon is mounted onto the front of the ship, and a stab of the fire button sends a colourful streak of electric death flying horizontally across the screen, eradicating any nasties in its path. Your ship is also supplied with a small complement of



As mentioned, shooting aliens occasionally releases a small floating pod that adds extra features to your ship when collected. Here's a rundown of exactly what each one does...

A Improves the acceleration of your ship.

V Increases your maximum speed.

T Allows you to fire more rapidly.

P is for penetration. Makes your laser more powerful.

C Hold down the fire button for continuous fire and mega devastation!

I You're now invincible for a full ten seconds.

B Nothing spectacular, just a few bonus points.

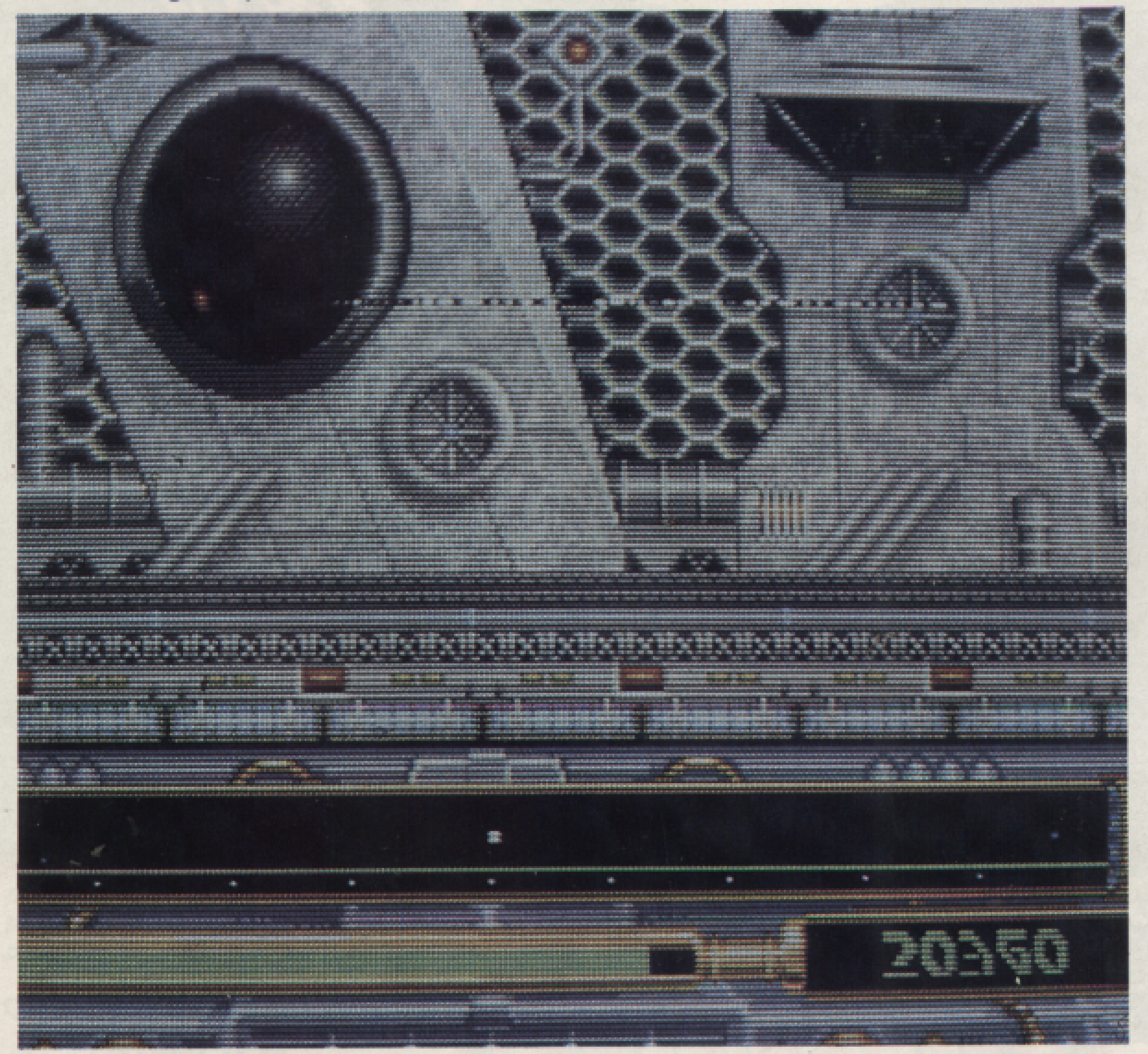
Ray





The forboding backdrop of Level Five on the ST. The candy-stripe object isn't as sweet as it looks

Another example of Pete Lyon's impressive graphics seen in the ST version of StarRay. This is the sixth level, which is fairly easy compared to the next – a harsh, unfriendly desert setting, complete with large trouble – shooting tanks, would you believe!

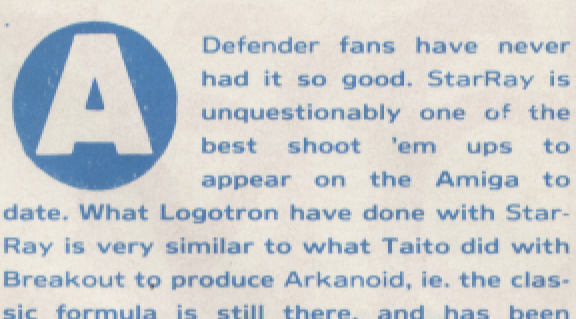


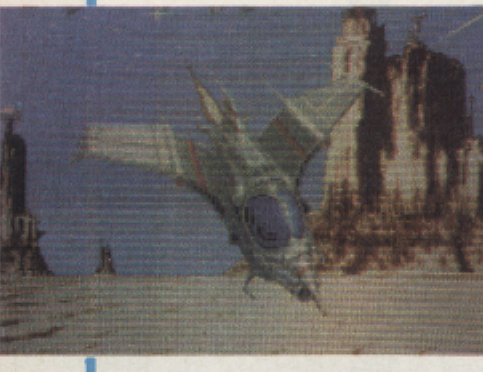
Vaporisers, otherwise known as Smart Bombs. Releasing one of these destroys every hostile ship on the screen.

Controls are fairly basic. By pushing the stick in the direction your fighter is facing, you apply thrust. The ship stays fairly central while the backdrop scrolls behind. In this way, the "thrust and blast" gameplay of the original has been retained. In order to keep each level alive, so to speak, the installations need protecting. Locate the nasties that are actually attacking the installations (the radar scanner comes in useful here), get to it and destroy the alien before it has a chance to drain the installation's power. If you're too late, an installation is lost. To make matters worse, on later levels, drained installations become hostile, firing at you and launching missiles. Should you lose all ten installations the game is lost.

A much quicker way to lose the game, however is to get killed yourself. Unlike **Defender**, a collision with a nasty or a missile is not fatal. Instead, you're given a shield which is depleted every time you crash into something. When it hits zero, you're dead.

To complete the level you're on, all the nasties on it with you must be destroyed. There are four 'waves' of aliens on each planet, and completion of each one results in a points bonus,

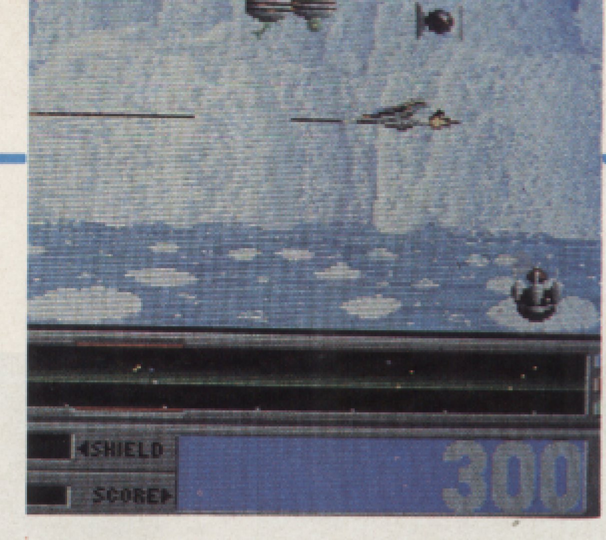




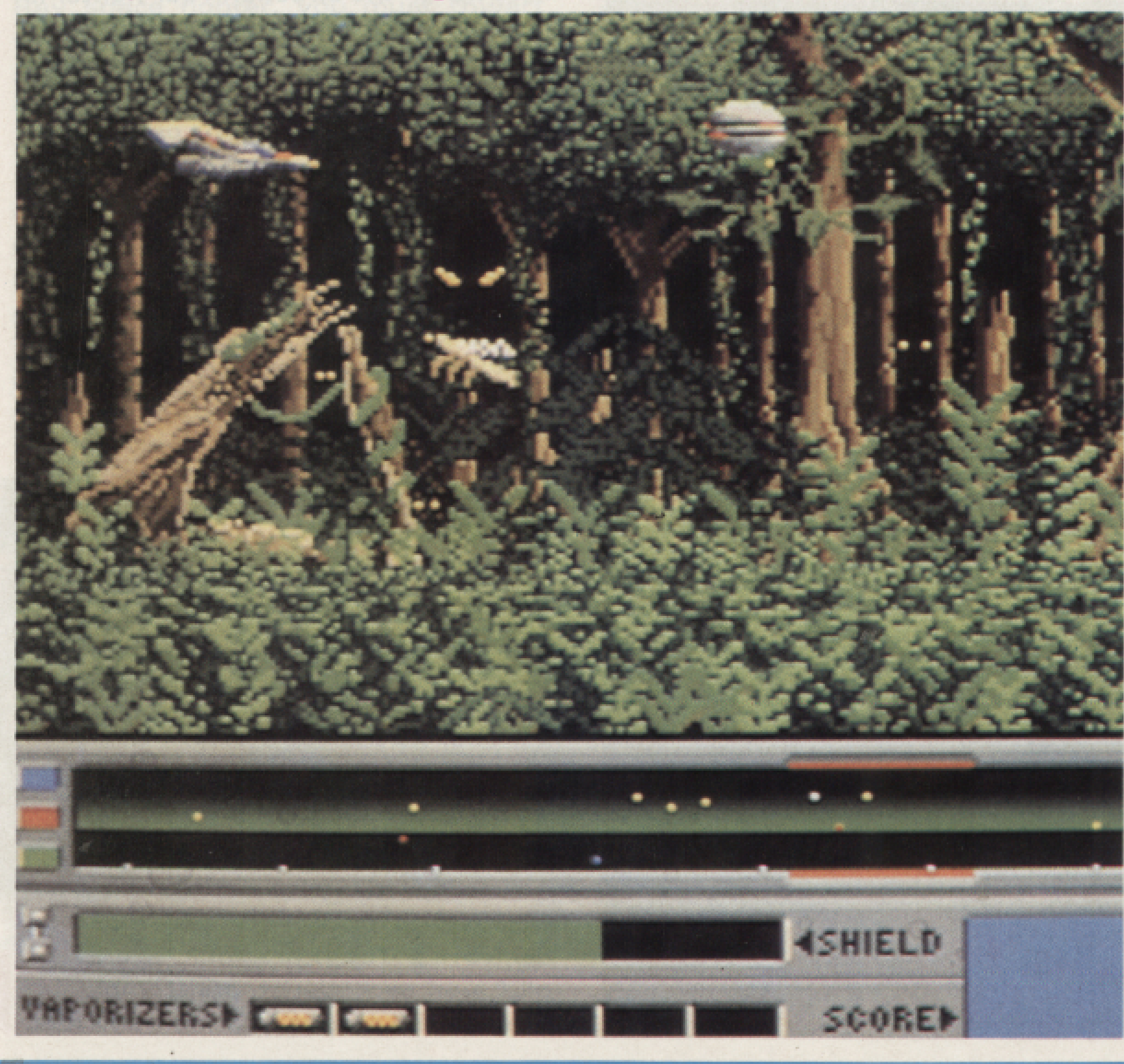
the size of which being dependent on which level you're on and the number of installations left.

Each planet has its own specific set of resident aliens and game features. Level Two, for instance, is set in a forest, and houses deadly striped killer bees. All of the levels contain one standard set of aliens that run throughout the entire game – the metallic hamburgers. If you're lucky, when you shoot one of these (or any other kind of alien for that matter) they may leave behind a floating icon, which can be picked up to power-up your ship. If you want to replenish your shield, you have to wait for an airbus to appear. When shot, a pod falls from it, and if you can catch it before it hits the ground, the feature is yours.

Battling through the second level on the Amiga, where greenery and unusual creatures abound. There are deadly dragonflies (one's about to hit your ship), stripy bees, pterodactyls, and of course the ubiquitous metallic hamburgers.



ST The ST version of StarRay is being converted by 16-bit maestro Steve Bak, the man responsible for Leatherneck, Goldrunner and Return To Genesis, as well as converting The Sentinel and Battleships among others to 16-bit. Graphics are by colleague Pete Lyon, and binary musician Dave Whittaker supplies the music and FX. The job of conversion has been done very well indeed. Graphically the game looks a little 'hazy' and the sprites are not quite as well defined, but all the original gameplay is there, and several extras have been added. Whereas the Amiga has five levels of parallax scrolling, the ST has seven! There are also more aliens than the Amiga version and there's an option to play the soundtrack while playing the game. Atari 1040 ST owners will also be able to get on down to the brilliant sampled soundtrack which takes up over 300K and sounds almost exactly like the Amiga original. A release date is set for around September, possibly in time for the PC Show.



A Defender fans have never had it so good. StarRay is unquestionably one of the best shoot 'em ups to appear on the Amiga to date. What Logotron have done with StarRay is very similar to what Taito did with Breakout to produce Arkanoid, ie. the classic formula is still there, and has been improved no end due to the addition of fantastic graphics, incredible sound and some new gameplay elements. Both the backdrops and sprites have been wonderfully defined and animated, and each level implements some most impressive parallax scrolling which helps to generate an excellent feel, making it no less than a joy to play. To add to the overall impression, the sampled in-game effects have been complimented by an atmospheric loading theme, and great high score table music. Presentation is first class, with plenty of options so you can tweak the game to your liking. You can play in silence, making it faster in the process, start on any of the first four levels, and save your scores to disk. My only gripe is that the Smart Bombs can only be activated by the right mouse button, which is fine if you're playing with the mouse, but not so convenient if you're using a joystick. Minor quibbles aside, StarRay well and truly replaces Sidewinder as the best Amiga shoot 'em up available. Buy it, lock your door, close all your windows and immerse yourself in this fantastic blast.

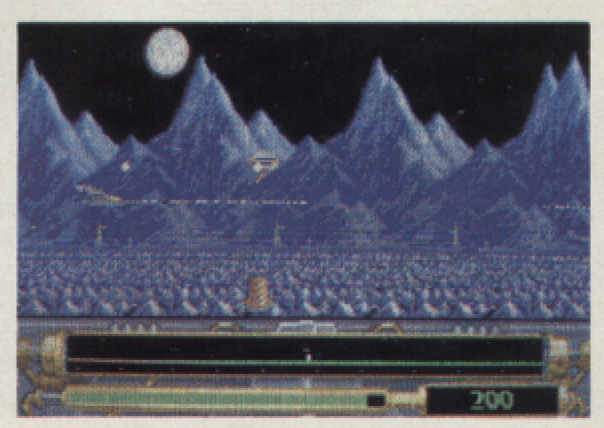
PRICE: £25.95
RELEASE DATE: Out Now



GRAPHICS	86%
SOUND	94%
PLAYABILITY	90%
VALUE	80%

OVERALL 88%

PC Information on the PC version is rather vague, as it's in the very early stages of conversion. It's likely to be in mono to allow a fast game speed, so all the gameplay should be retained. A finished version of StarRay is due for release on the PC in November.



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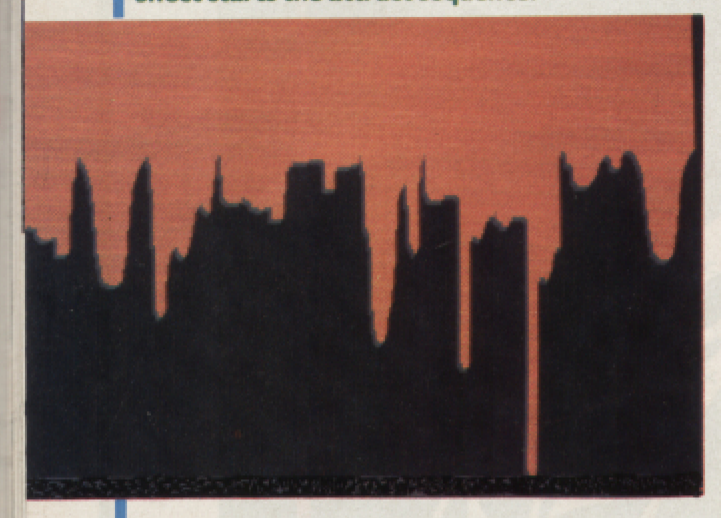
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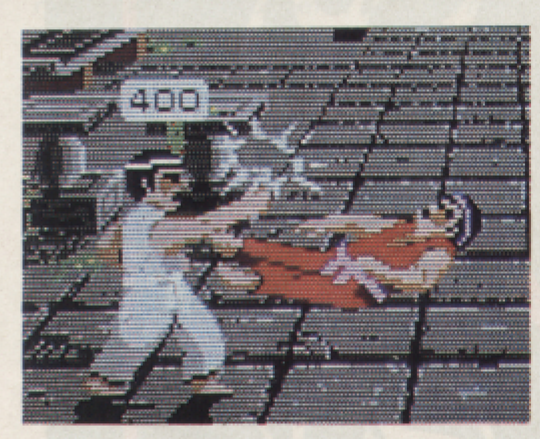


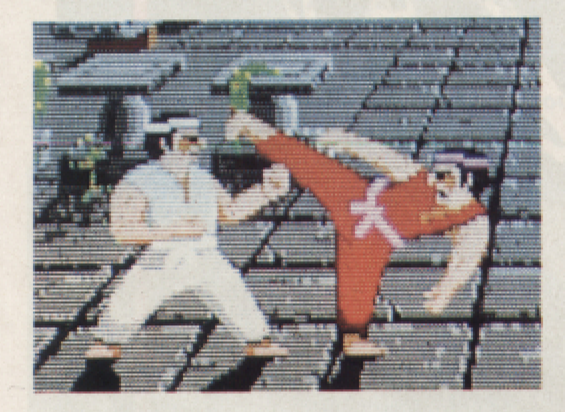
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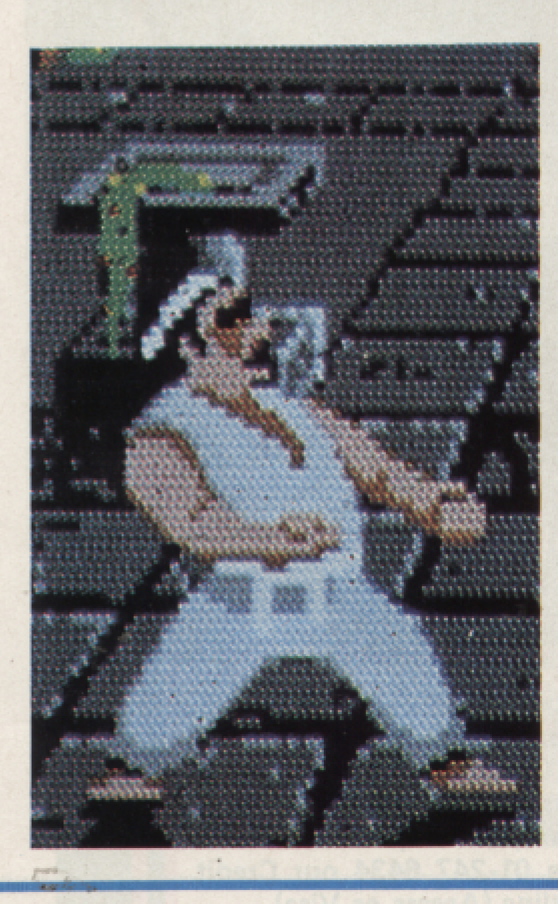
International Karate

A Manhattan skyline? Or the monitor awash with blood? A stunning effect starts the attract sequence.





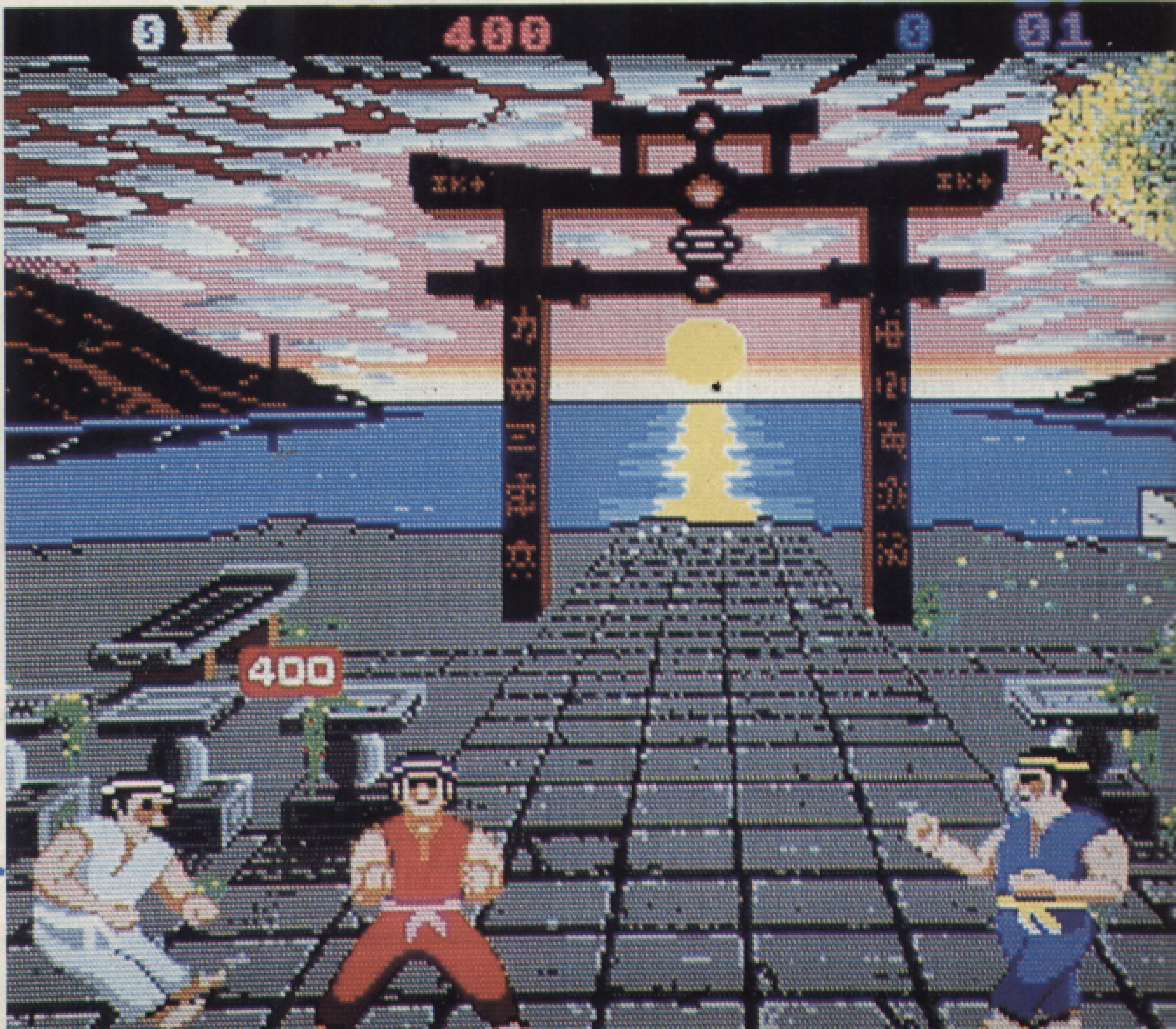




A plethora of fighting games are available for the 16-bit machines, most of them in the mould of the ageing Data East coin-op **Karate Champ**. But there are few of any commendable quality. Arguably the most memorable is System 3's **International Karate** on the Atari ST, written by Hungarian programming team Andromeda. **IK+**, by the author of the original 8-bit incarnations – Archer Maclean, knocks its predecessor into a cocked hat.

Three players fight it out in front of the pleasant, animated backdrop seen here. One of the fighters is always controlled by the computer, using one of eight different fight strategies to keep you on your toes, while the other

Gallons of gratuitous fightin' and fumpin' fun to be had here. Watch out for the many neat touches, such as the falling leaves, leaping fish, birds, spiders, inch-worms, and even a periscope! There's plenty more, too – all activated via the keyboard. Leave the fighters alone or press 'T' and their trousers end up around their ankles!



ational



Gary Penn trades blows with a pair of hardened opponents in Activision's latest and comes to the conclusion that it can't be beat...

rate+

two fighters can be either human or computer controlled.

There are 17 moves available from the joystick, including the old favourites such as the punch, low kick, shin kick and flying kick, plus three nifty new ones: an athletic backflip which would cause any gymnast to turn green with envy, a cranium-cracking headbutt, and a double head kick, which, when used effectively, knocks out both opponents in style. Points are awarded for putting the other players

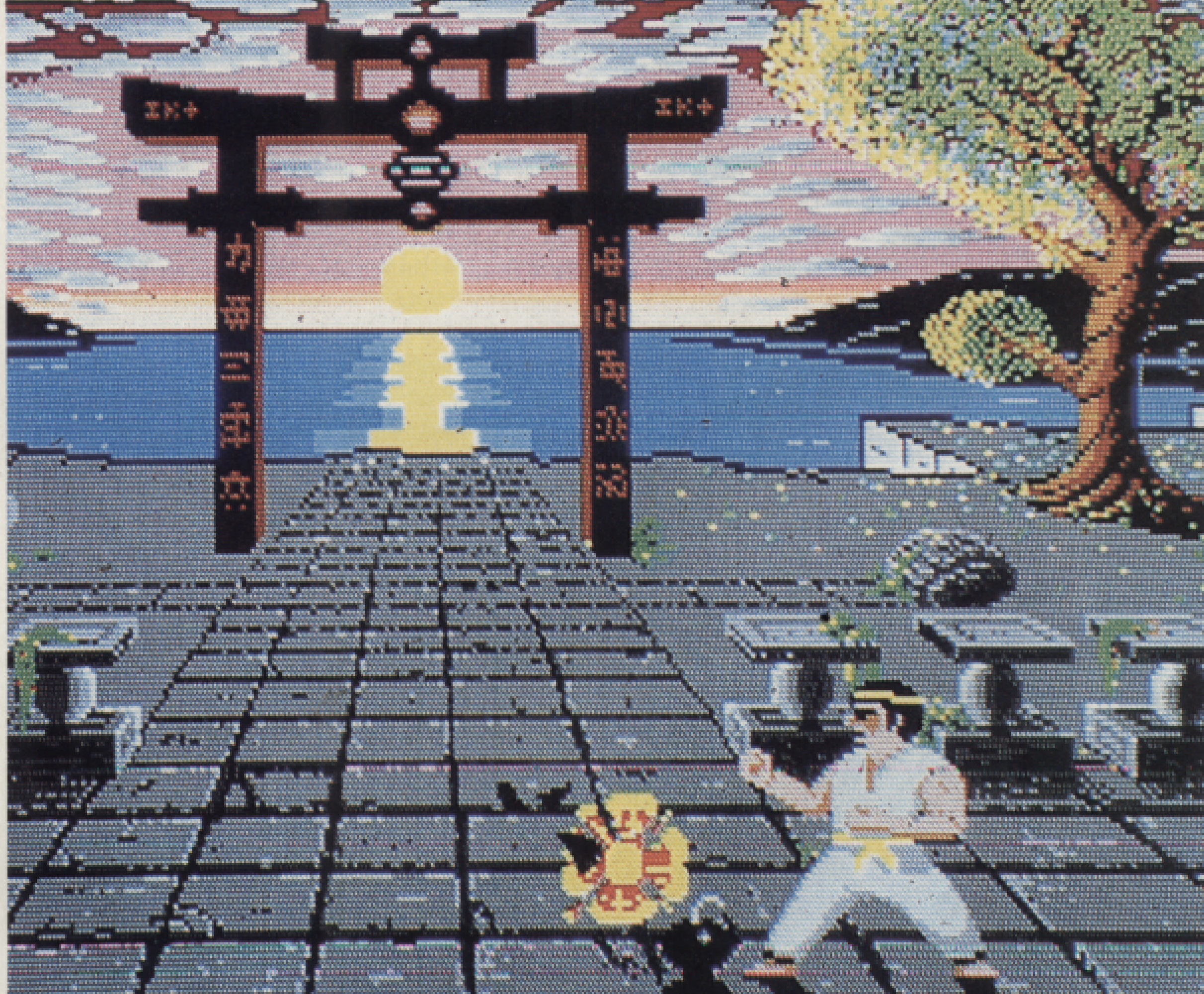
The simplistic but effective title screen, complete with overtly athletic karate men looking like something from the credits of a 70's movie. Very mesmeric...



The Pause Mode, in which six karate men work out in time to the soundtrack and make a lot of Bruce Lee-type noises in the process.



on their backs, and each knockout earns the attacker either one or two combat points (depending on whether the victim was hit from either in front or behind). When the 30-second time limit expires, a mystical judge appears to announce the winner and loser. The player with the least combat points can no longer play and a computer-controlled player takes over. In the event of a tie, the players' scores determine a winner, but if the scores on the doors are the same then both players continue to fight.

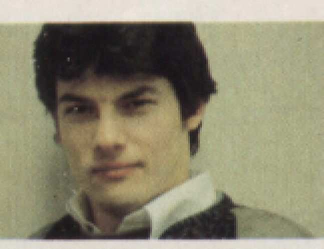


Use either a well-timed low kick or shin kick to send the bombs bouncing off the screen before they explode. And if you can't manage that, watch out for the shrapnel. An engrossing bonus round which proves in-creasingly nail-biting as the bombs appear more frequently, with shorter fuses and more often than not right on top of where you're standing!

84

REVIEW

LIFESTYLES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS
Archer Maclean



Perception can be a bad thing. Computer games are generally perceived as childish, and the programmers are invariably perceived as bespectacled, acne-ridden, scruffy youths with more money than sense. Of course, we all know that nothing could be further from the truth. Take Archer Maclean...

This 26 year-old handsome hunk of a land doesn't deal soley with bits, bytes and op-codes – oh no. A bit of an Action Man with realistic hands and gripping hair is our Archer. You're more likely to find him strapped beneath a Microlite or a hang-glider, or running around shooting people in Skirmish or even water skiing. Archer's been there and done that, which partly explains why he's only ever written three computer games.

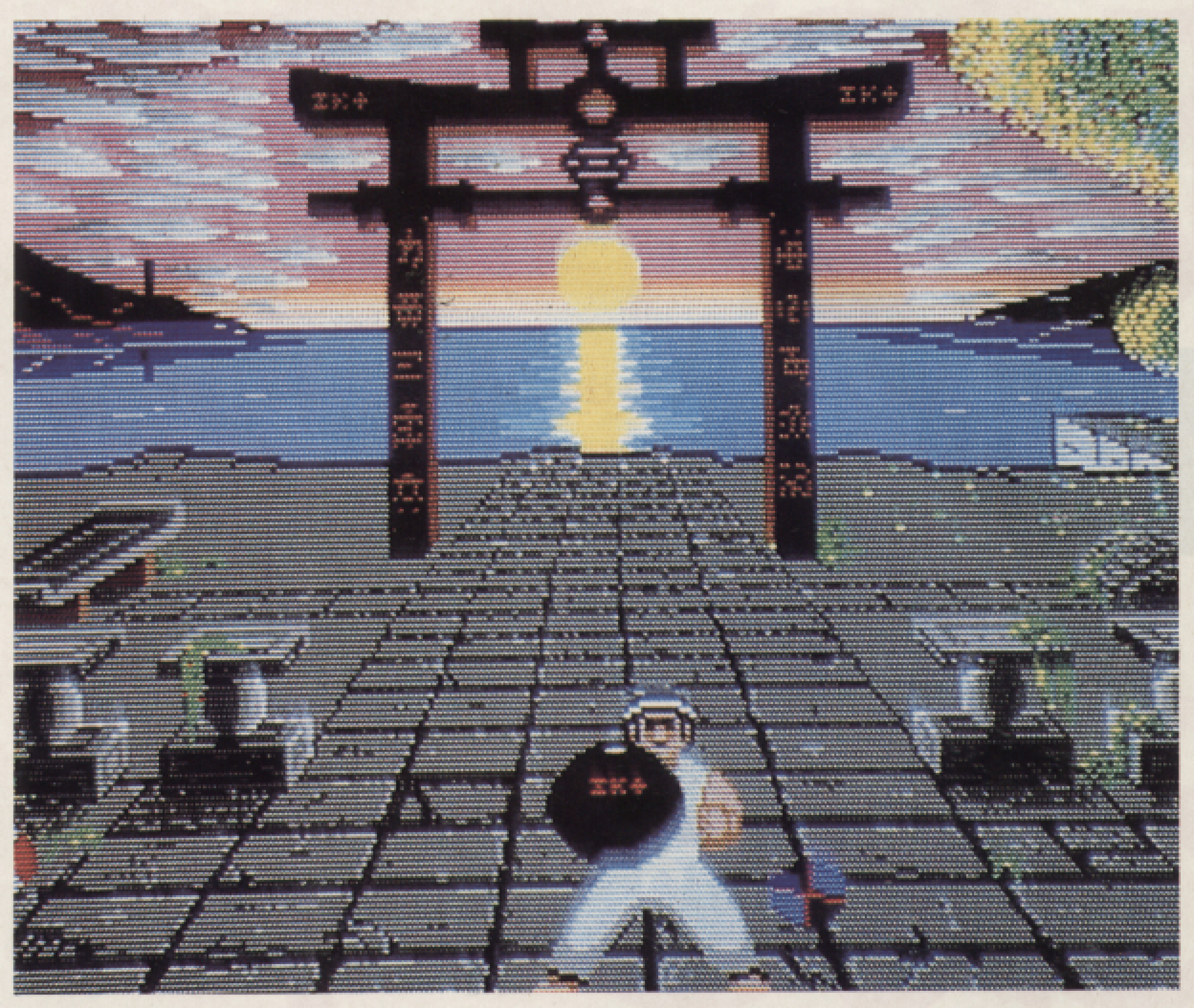
His first success was Dropzone – an outstanding horizontally scrolling shoot 'em up loosely based on Williams' equally classy coin-op, Stargate (to all intent and purposes, the follow-up to Defender). He then turned his hand to the beat 'em up genre and notched up a major hit with International Karate (Atari and Commodore 8-bit) and International Karate + – produced because as far as he was concerned, IK was far from finished. He was also unimpressed with Andromeda's version of IK, which is why he wrote the ST version of IK+ – despite the fact he had never touched an ST and "had to learn it inside out in a couple of months."

So what's next? "I'm considering doing ST and Amiga versions of Dropzone, and I've got four new game designs in mind – which I won't say anything about in case someone rips them off. I've also just got into the knitting business: 'Quality Knitwear made to your requirements'. It's a small company called Spinoffs and we can make any type of knitwear with almost any design on it. Call Fiona on 01 445 6587 and ask for details... Oh – and surfing. I want to have a bash at surfing. Preferably somewhere like California or Hawaii..."

What a guy!

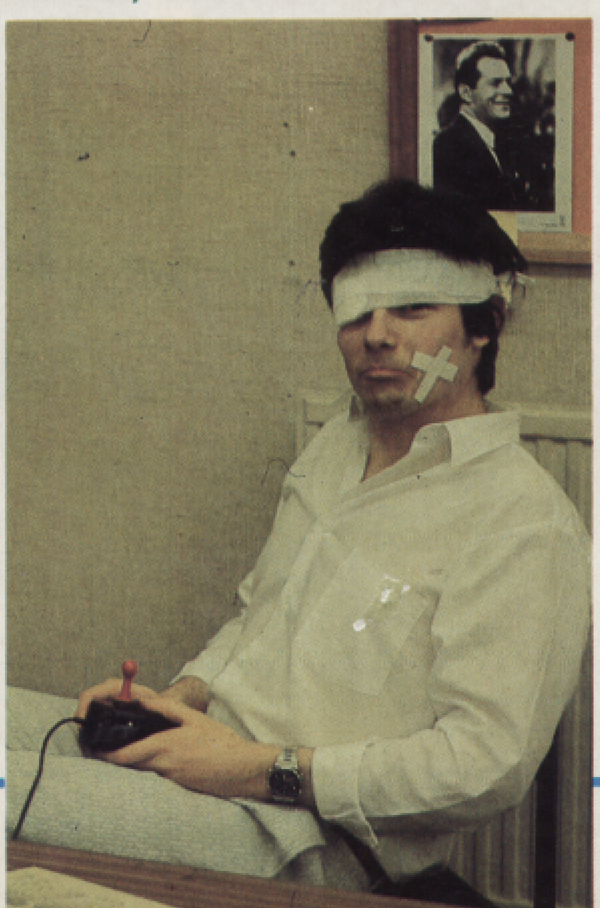


Having got to grips with the Amiga, Archer is busily beavering away and hopes to have this version finished before October. It won't differ greatly from its Atari counterpart, although the already superb sampled sounds should benefit from a bit of stereo.



The first of the two bonus rounds. Balls and spinning heads bounce onto the screen and are either deflected with the logo-emblazoned shield or ducked for bonus points. A hefty 5,000 bonus points are yours should you manage to survive an onslaught of 64 balls – a highly demanding task, more so as they get faster and faster.

Archer's own creation gets the better of him . . . he he. "It took roughly four months to write – on and off," he declares modestly. There's roughly 400K of source, 200K of binary files and 96K of two-channel 8-bit sampled sounds . . . a bit of trivia for any technically minded bods . . .



ST Out of all the fighting that have appeared since the ST first hit the streets, International Karate + is undoubtedly the best. Granted, it may not be as visually immediate as its ageing predecessor and there's only one backdrop – but cosmetics don't necessarily make a playable game. IK+'s strength is its playability which is greatly enhanced by the use of some excellent sampled sounds. The moves and blows are accompanied by Bruce Lee-esque swishes, extremely painful-sounding cracks and even the occasional yelp. Brilliant stuff. IK+ is the sort of game you can dig out in a year's time and still enjoy playing. If you buy a beat 'em up this year, make sure this is the one.

PRICE: £19.99
RELEASE DATE: September

GRAPHICS	79%
SOUND	94%
PLAYABILITY	90%
VALUE	86%
OVERALL	**88%**

ACTION SERVICE

Somewhere in Europe,
in a top secret training centre...

COBRA Soft

Somewhere in Europe, at a confidential location, lies one of the world's toughest school : a top secret training centre...
Behind impenetrable barbed-wire and patrolled by wardens armed to the teeth, stretches the course, a gruelling track of obstacles, traps and dangers, stretching every commando's ability to the limit.

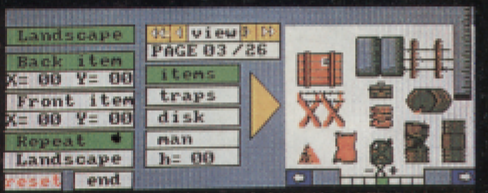
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QUALIFICATIONS: strength, courage, nerves of steel...

ACTION SERVICE is a brilliantly executed Commando School Simulation, with all the features that add up to one of the most challenging and exciting action programs ever produced :
- unique simulated video recording and playback system, allowing action replay of your performances (to help you to improve it).
- lifelike action graphics with superb sound and speech effects.
- easy to use, difficult to master !
- up to 12 players - competing on 5 different modes : physical, risk, close-combat, combination and the unique Commando Construction Course !



The video control panel

Including the superb "Cobra Command" Construction Set:
- construct, edit and save commando courses, making them as easy or difficult as you wish.
- challenge your friends on the course of your own design !



The Construction Set control panel

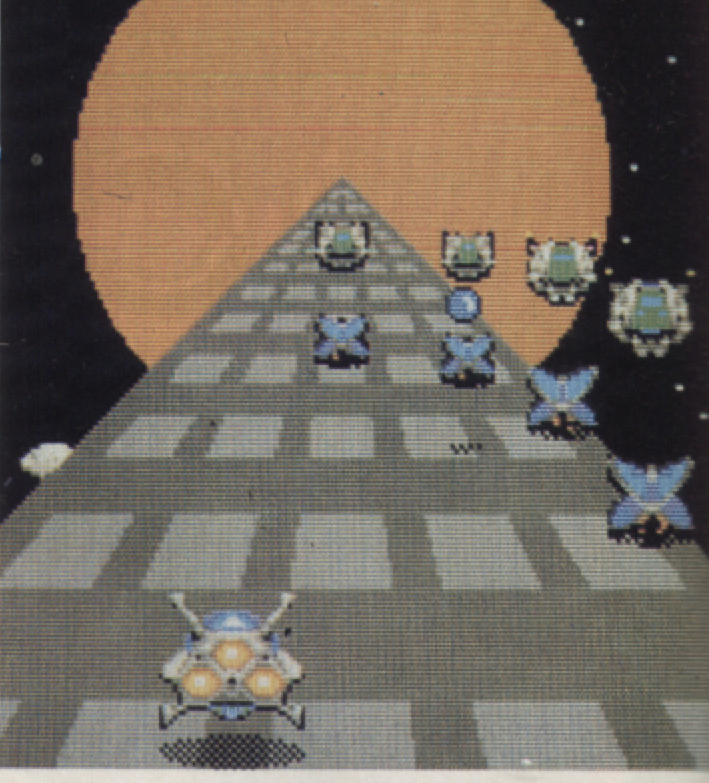
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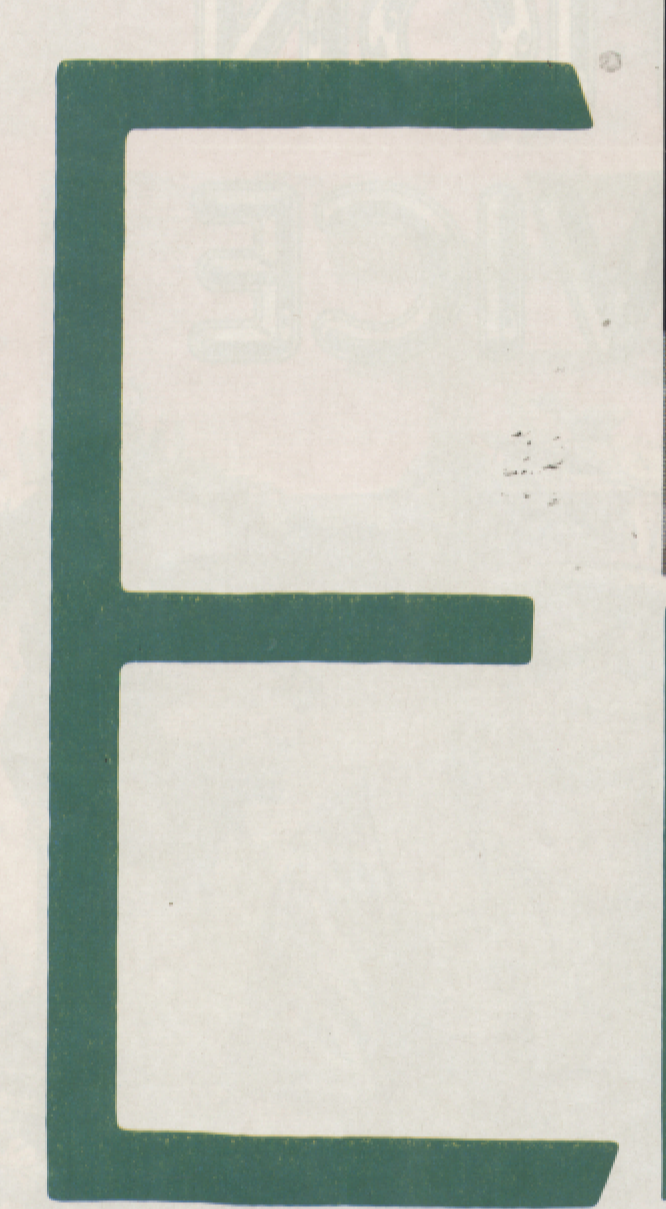
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Screen shots from Atari ST version

ACTION SERVICE - ONE DAY THIS MAY BE MORE THAN JUST A GAME...







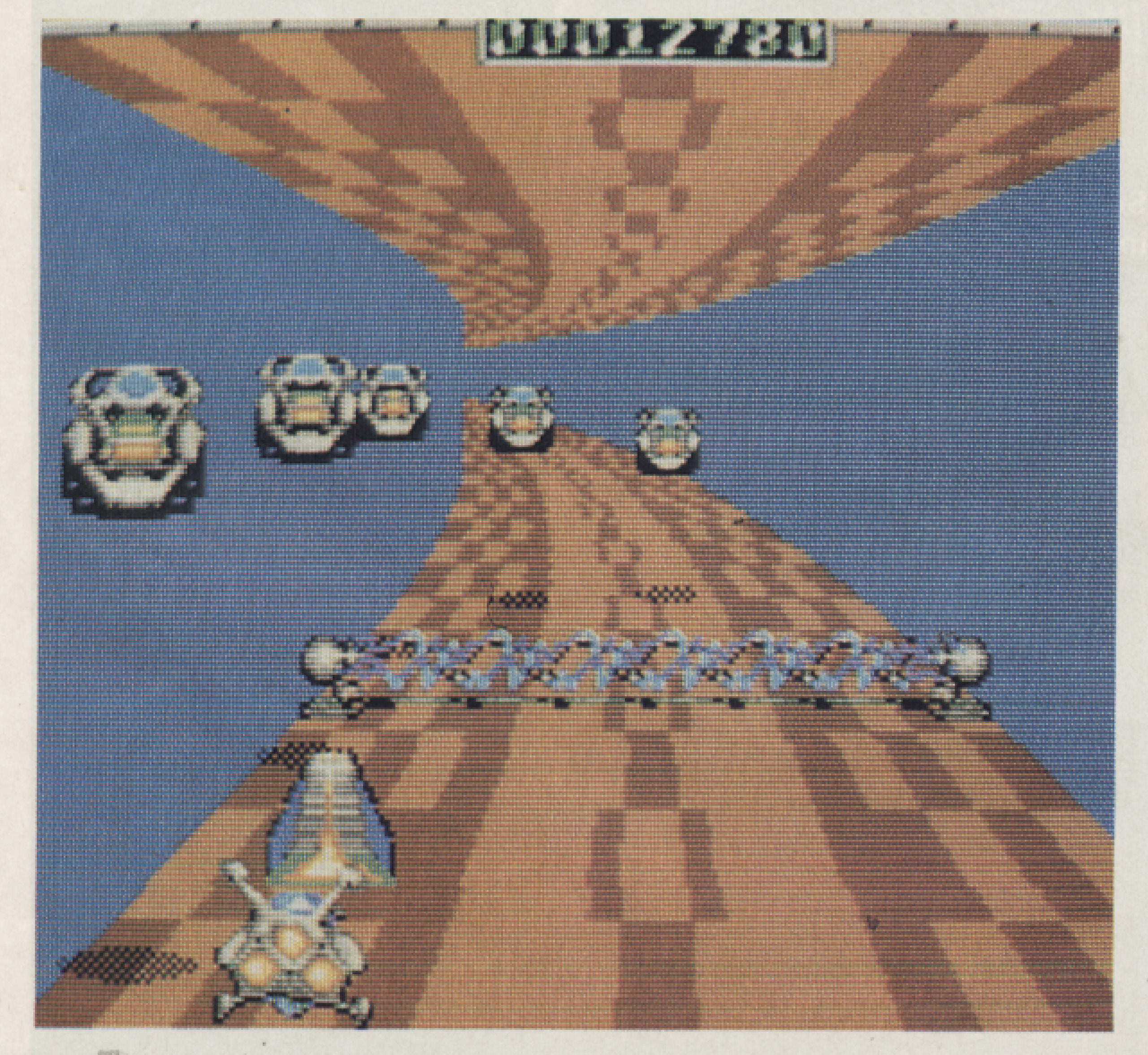
Eliminator takes the player on a high speed race through a tortuous alien roadway set over 14 levels. Each section features tunnels, hills and curves which are effectively portrayed by an extremely smooth 3D update. Similarly, alien formations approach out of the distance shooting missiles, and a variety of static objects appear to be shot, dodged or leaped over using ramps.

The aim is simply to progress as far as possible, and the player is provided with four craft for this purpose. The ship travels at a constant speed and is simply directed to left and right and the blasters operated by the fire button. The course layout always remains constant, allowing a mental map of the route to be built up.

The player's craft is vulnerable to alien firepower and therefore carries armour which is replenished by collecting icons along the route. Further icons allow the ship's weaponry to be improved sequentially, from the standard single shot blaster, to one of five powerful and directional variations.

The end of each level is signified by entering a large portal, at which point the current score is calculated and the ship's armour topped up. Also, every other level releases a secret code which allows the player to re-enter the game without having to play through the earlier sections. However, the ship always starts with the minimum firepower, so starting from scratch is usually the preferred option.

The number of 3D racing games has vastly increased over the last few months, many of which – particularly the coin-op conversions – have been disappointing. Although not as complex as many of its predecessors, Eliminator does, however, succeed in creating a believable and exhilarating sensation of movement, and provides a challenging and enjoyable dodge 'n' shoot 'em up which should keep most players happy for several months.

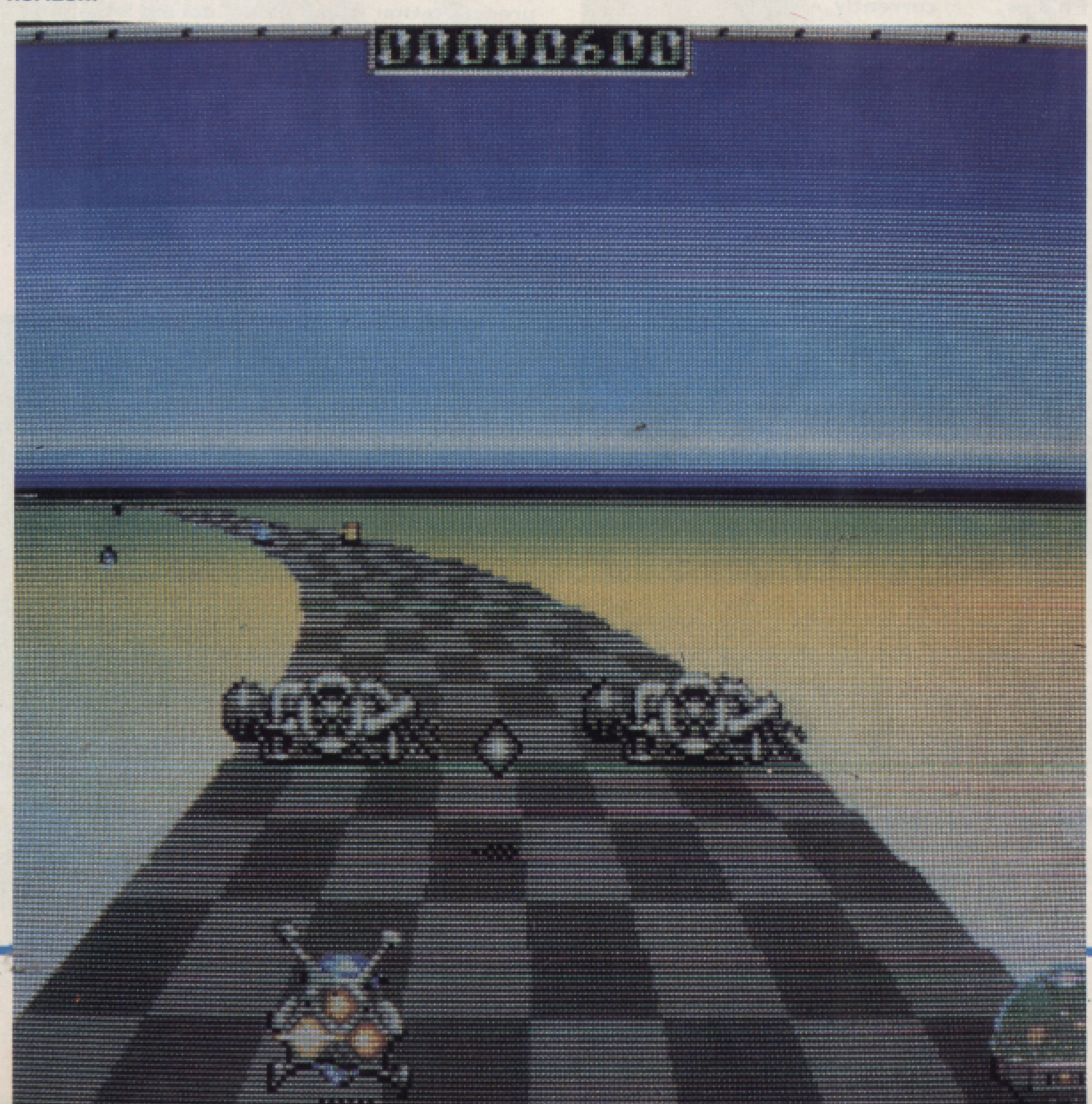


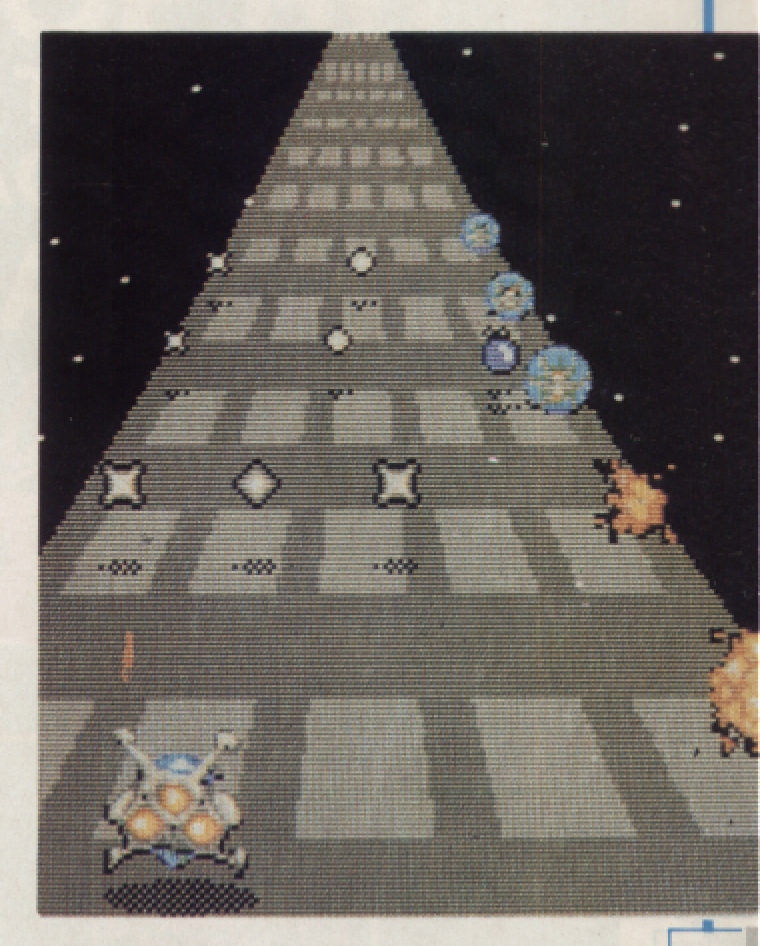
Scooting along the tunnel section of the second level. Shoot up the ramp in front of your craft to propel it upside-down onto the uppermost track, thus avoiding the deadly charge ahead. Driving topsy turvy is highly disorientating at first, but you *have* to get used to it if you want to make progress.

Hewson's first original 16-bit product was initially designed as a motorbike racing game featuring tunnels which the bike would be able to ride up, in true 'Wall Of Death' style. However, technical problems meant that this idea was dropped in favour of a different approach. Steve Jarratt takes a closer look...

nator

There are obstacles aplenty thrown in your way as you speed around the M25 of the future. The single-shot weapon in your possession isn't overly effective, but there's the opportunity to boost your firepower just around the corner – the blue and yellow crystals on the horizon.





Burn along the spaceways at high speed, erradicating any aliens foolish enough to get in the way. Here You've got the best weapon available – a multi-shot spray. And doesn't it just!

JOHN PHILLIPS



Although previously an unknown quantity to 16-bit owners, John Phillips has been programming games for the last couple of years on the popular 8-bit machines. (Just for the record, his earlier successes include **Impossaball**, **Sunburst** and **Nebulus** – now on the ST, and our cover disk for that matter!) It was with the latter product that he had his first major hit: it was received to critical acclaim and reasonable sales in the high street.

After completing **Nebulus**, John moved onto the ST and his first 16-bit project, **Eliminator**. The transition from 8- to 16-bit was made less problematic due to the fact that John had been using the larger machines during his University days when he studied cybernetics. He also feels that the ST is easier to program than the 8-bit machines. "I started **Eliminator** last November. However I wasn't pleased with my efforts, so I scrapped it in February and started again from scratch. It then took me another three or four months to complete it. I learned a lot during the previous four



months but I suppose I do work quickly."

The speed at which John can finish projects is emphasised by the ST conversion of **Nebulus**: Andrew lewson farmed the project out to another ;oftware house who struggled for three nonths without any real progress. John hen decided to do it himself and completed t in a month!

John's games are all recognisable as being innovative and unusually presented. \nd although proud of the idea for **Nebulus**, ohn admits that it was more a product of uck than a fertile imagination: "I was vorking on a **Uridium**-style shoot 'em up for he Spectrum, where the player had to negotiate the surface of a constantly rotating horizontal tube littered with raised constructions. Technical problems forced me to move the project elsewhere, and during its implementation on the 64, I turned the tube on end. It was then just a simple matter of converting it into a platform game.

"I always try to incorporate simple or easy to learn gameplay into a totally different environment. I prefer games which work on a 'levels' principle, rather than with a large, sprawling gameplay. I also like to create a sense of atmosphere. In **Nebulus** I wanted the player to feel as if he could reach out and grab the towers; or reach into the screen in the case of **Eliminator**."

John sees his latest project as a follow-up to **Nebulus**, in that it uses the rotating routines as its inspiration. He plans to have the player's craft on the surface of a rotating sphere with aliens moving around its surface in true 3D. It's definitely a 16-bit only game – and he's still not sure whether the ST can cope with the maths or not.

John likes playing as well as programming, although he rarely has the time to do so. His favourite at the moment is **Virus**, and he's looking forward to seeing **Whirligig** and **Damocles**.

Innovator and Eliminator **programmer, John Phillips, currently writing a sequel to** Nebulus.

ST

Eliminator is a very smooth and polished game, being well presented and beautifully designed. Progress is a challenging and continuous process, by dint of the nicely graded levels, and the code entry system is also a particularly welcome inclusion. The graphics are of a very high standard, with some very smart sprites and possibly the smoothest 3D update so far. The ST's sound chip is used to the best of its ability, and features some decent effects and a droning, but strangely pleasant soundtrack through-out play. Eliminator will be widely available in October and comes highly recommended for some addictive, high speed action.

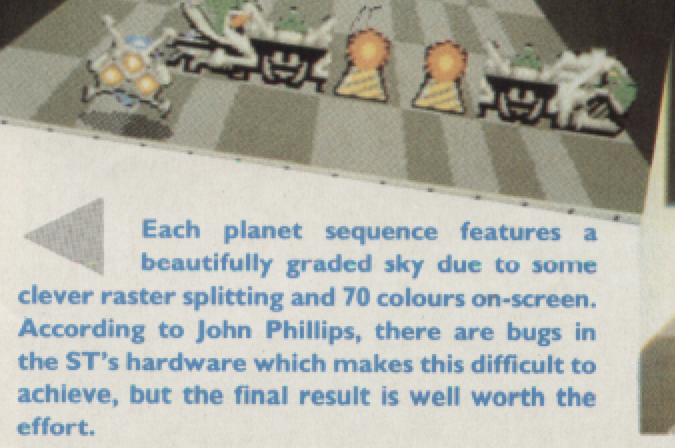
PRICE: £19.99
RELEASE DATE: October

GRAPHICS	87%
SOUND	74%
PLAYABILITY	90%
VALUE	78%

OVERALL 85%

A

The Amiga version of Eliminator should be available at the same time as the ST version, but it's currently being written by Marcus Grimmer in Switzerland and was unavailable for review at the time of going to press. Rather than being ported straight over, Hewson are currently improving the music and sound effects, and refining the graphics. The ability to use the blitter also frees a large amount of memory, so there should be even more levels to play through.



Dodge and weave through the tunnel on Level Three, armed with two multi-shot cannons



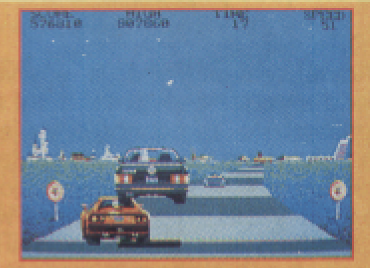
Each planet sequence features a beautifully graded sky due to some clever raster splitting and 70 colours on-screen. According to John Phillips, there are bugs in the ST's hardware which makes this difficult to achieve, but the final result is well worth the effort.



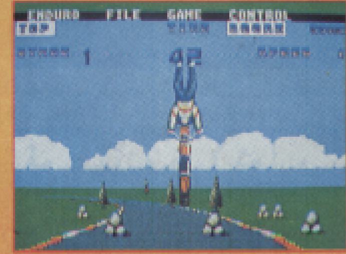




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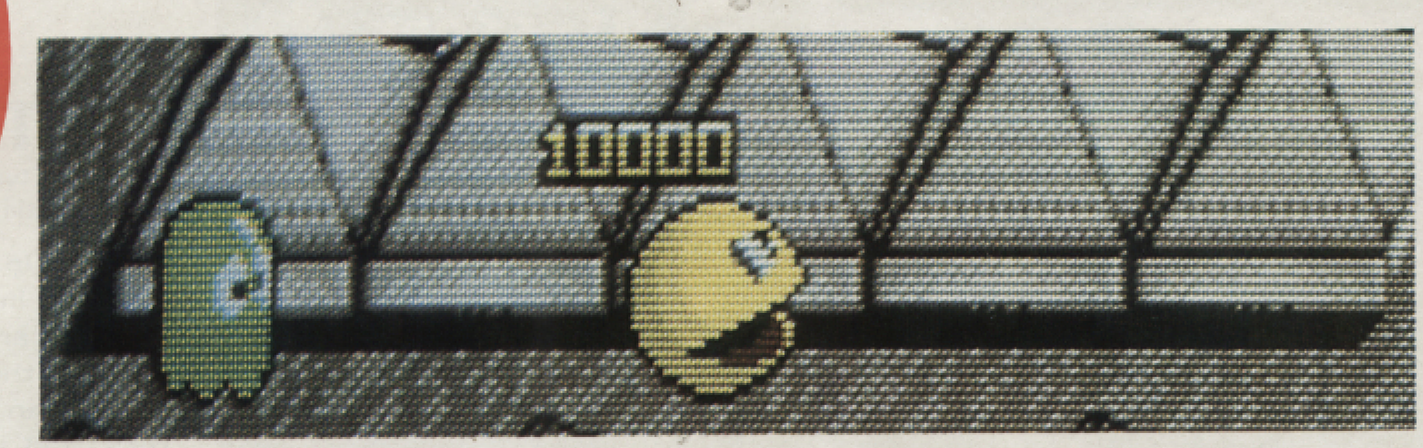
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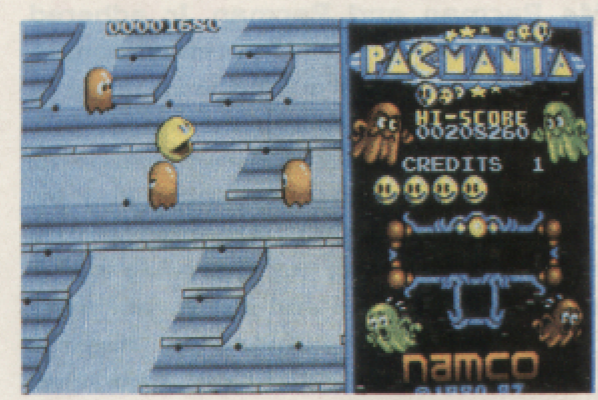
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Pacmania



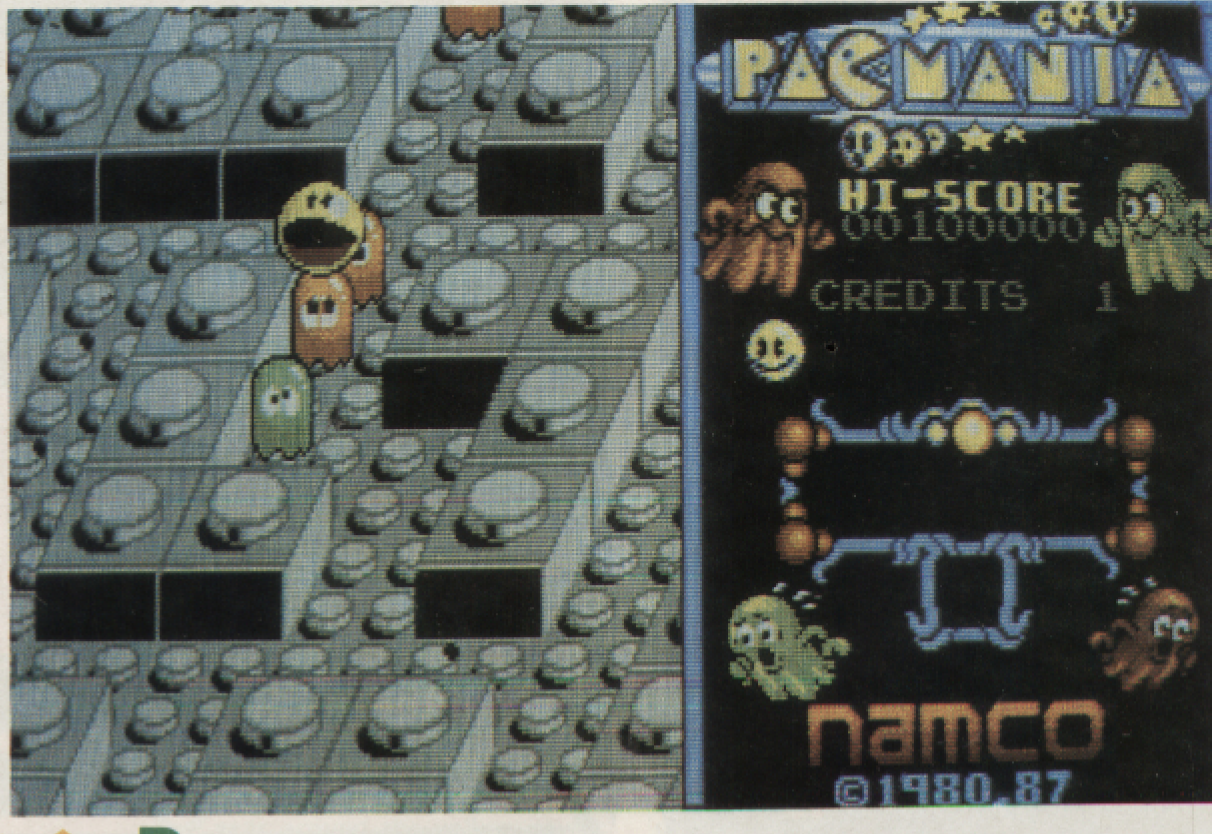
Almost a decade after a cute yellow ball called Pacman gobbled his way into the hearts of a nation, Namco unleashed yet another sequel. Pacmania quickly developed a cult following when it appeared in the arcades earlier this year, and Grand Slam's officially licensed conversion will undoubtedly do the same. Gary Penn goes wicka wicka . . .



The Jungly Steps of the sixth and seventh levels are difficult to negotiate, with Clyde steaming around the maze like a Jack Russell with its tail on fire. By the time you get to Level Ten the action really hots up, and it's like playing under the influence of a turbo pill – only you don't move quite so fast!

Ask any non-computer or video games player to name a video game, and he or she is sure to reply either **'Space Invaders'** or, more likely, **'Pacman'**. The coin-op was a world-wide success, and public awareness was, and still is, extensive. Hardly surprising, as Pacman's gameplay is so delightfully simplistic and yet addictive, and its cutesy nature succeeded in attracting a new breed of female gamesplayers. Pacman inspired all manner of spin-offs . . . apart from the ubiquitous and comparatively mundane T-Shirts and watches, there was a record (anyone remember, or own for that matter, a copy of Pacman Fever?) and even a TV show.

There were sequels galore, including Ms Pacman, Pacman Jr and Pacland (currently being converted to the ST and Amiga, incidentally), and of course, more recently, Pacmania. While

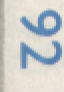


Pacman jumps for joy, saves his bacon, and turns a few heads in the process . . .



The power pills have the same effect as before . . . eat one and the ghosts turn blue and it's Pacman's turn to do the chasing!

Level Three is a Courage Round, comprising the same maze layout as Level Two but in a different colour scheme – and with even more aggressive ghosts.

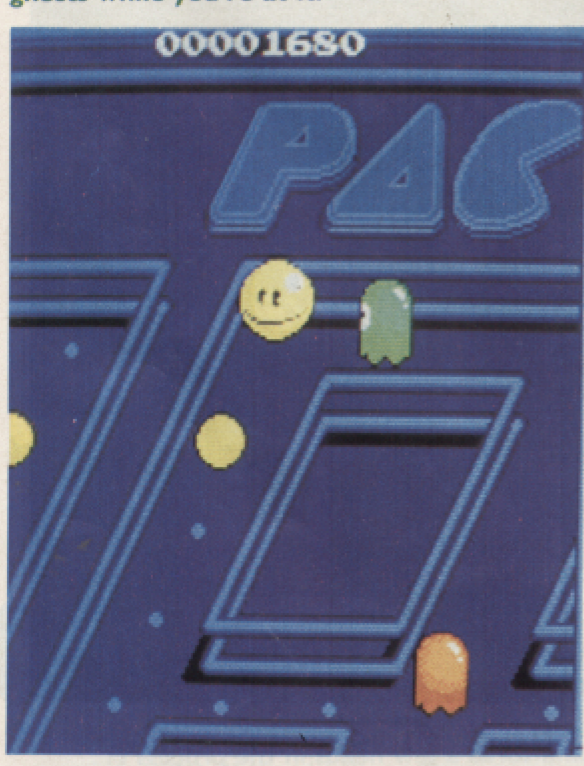


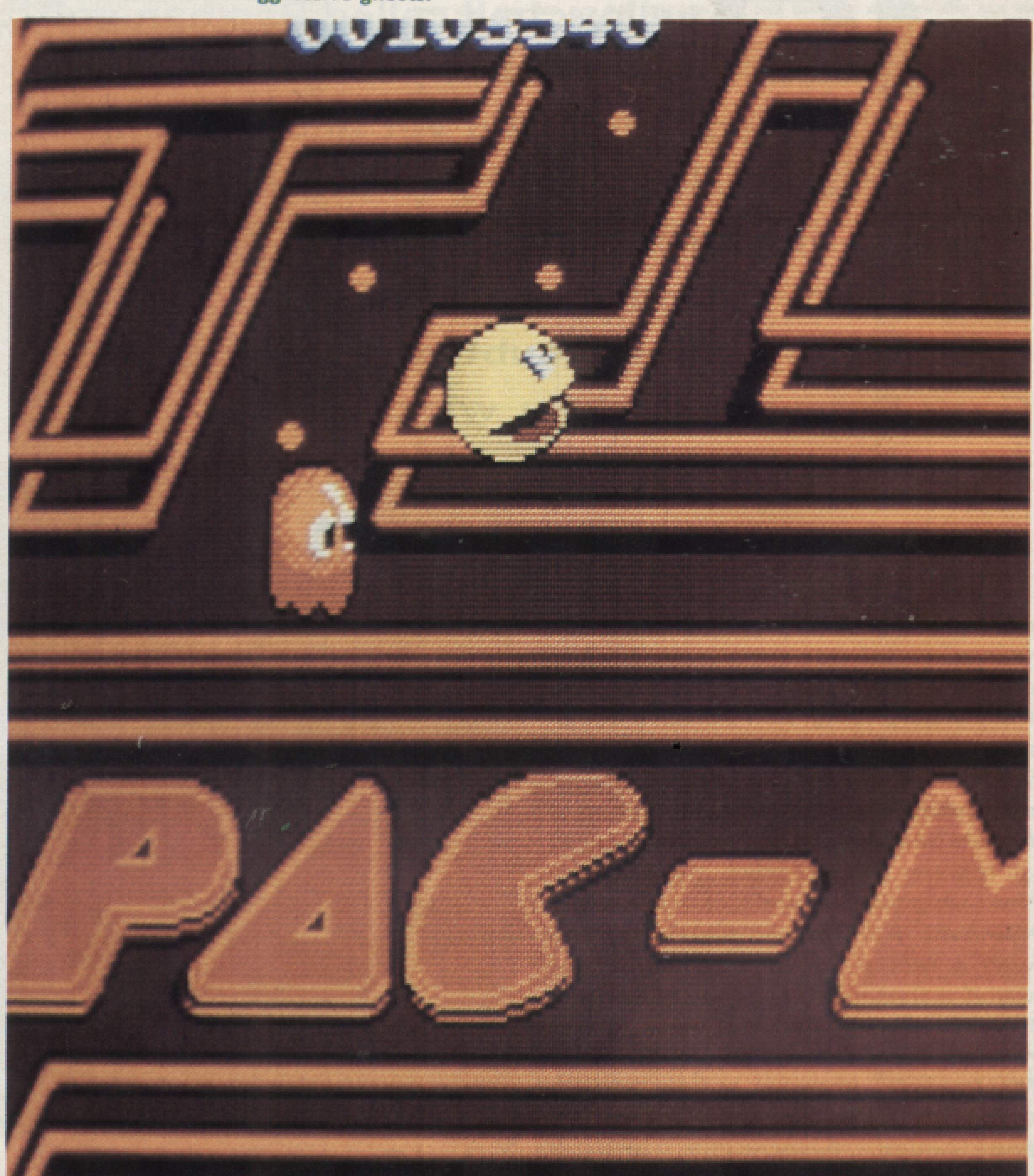
Ms Pacman and Pacman Jr adhered closely to the original immensely popular formula, and Pacland was more in keeping with the television series, Pacmania is a slightly different kettle of fish. It retains the simplistic and infuriatingly addictive gameplay of the legendary original, but there are a few important tweaks and some very noticeable aesthetic changes . . . namely five bouncy soundtracks, improved sound effects and graphics, and four distinctly different eight-way scrolling mazes which are shown in oblique perspective.

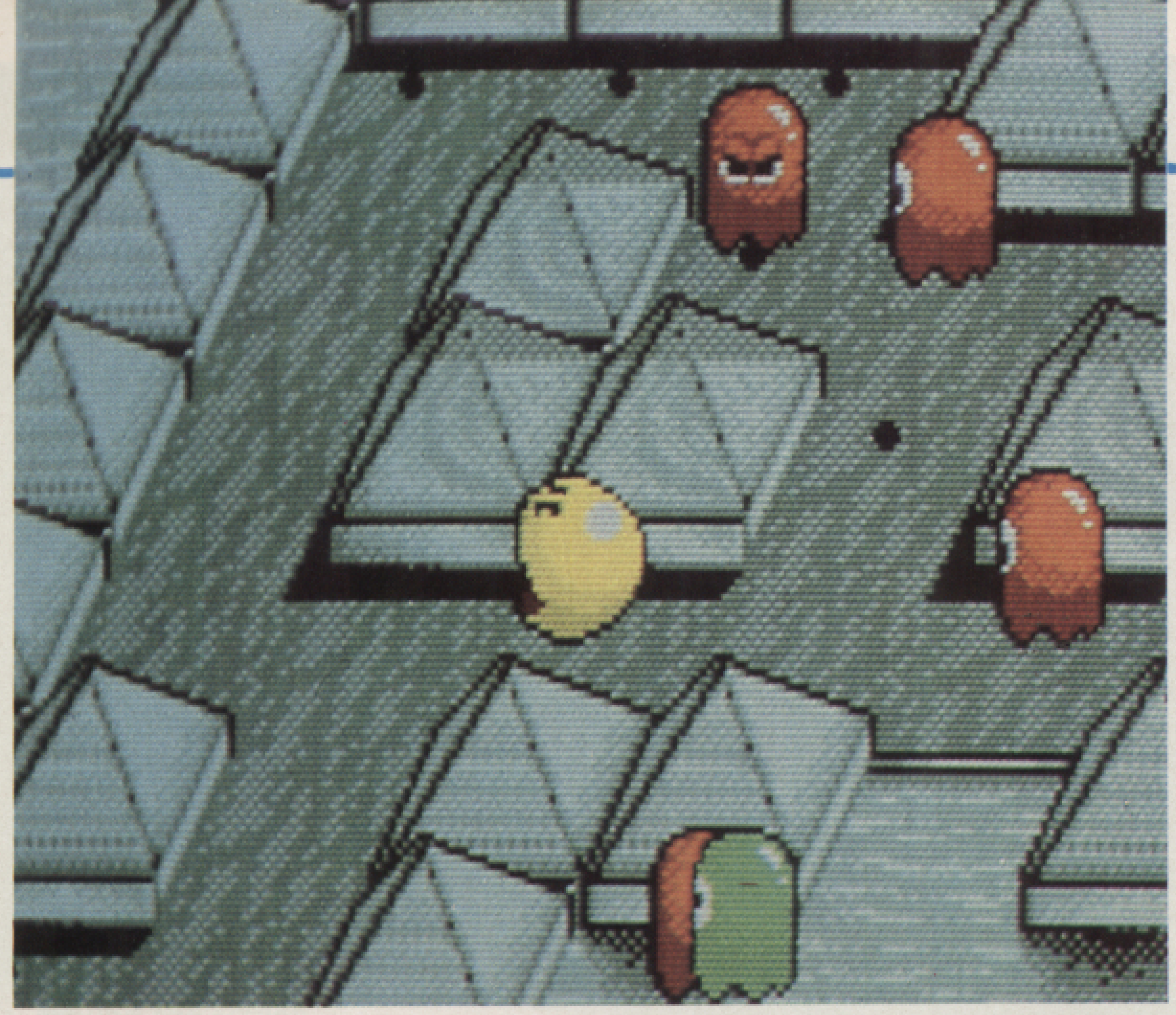
The first maze follows exactly the same layout as the single-screen maze featured in the original Pacman, just to get you in the mood. As you guide Pacman around the mazes, gobbling dots in the time-honoured tradition, the screen scrolls to follow his progress, and you can never be too sure about what's lurking around the corner. The fact that you can no longer see all of the maze at once adds an innovative new twist and plenty of new problems. There you are, happily munching away, when all of a sudden you run into a ghost. But never fear – a quick stab of the fire button sends Pacman leaping into the air, and with a bit of slick manoeuvring you can sail over the ghosts' heads.

The bonus objects which appear be-

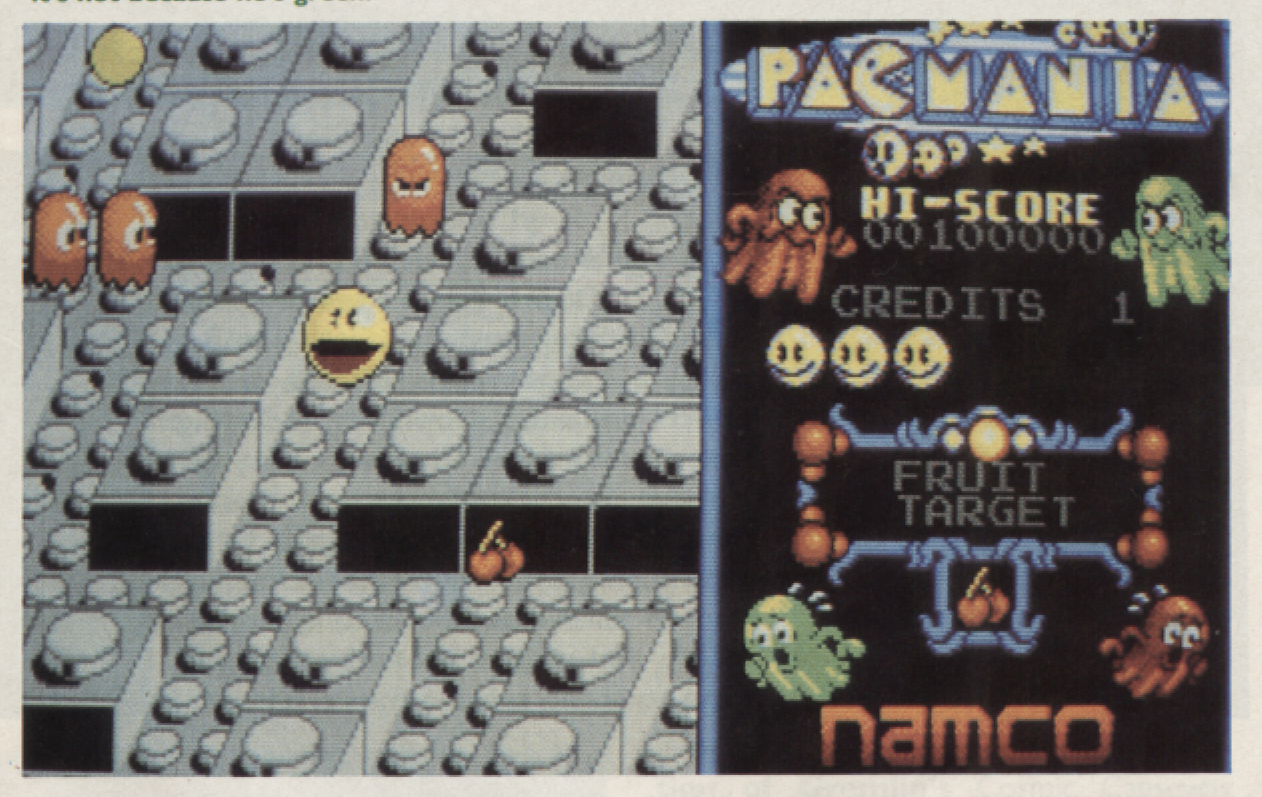
Ladies and Gentlemen . . . It's the Pacman Theatre! Take a stroll through Pacman Park – and gobble a few ghosts while you're at it.





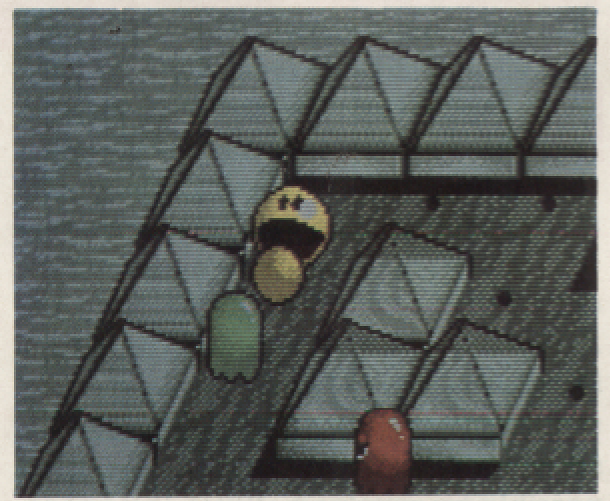


Beware of jumping ghosts! Inky, Pinky, Blinky and Clyde are joined by a couple of new chums – Sue and Jumpy. Clyde's the miserable sod who zips around the mazes at high speed and is difficult to avoid. It's not too difficult to guess how Jumpy earns his name... and it's not because he's green.

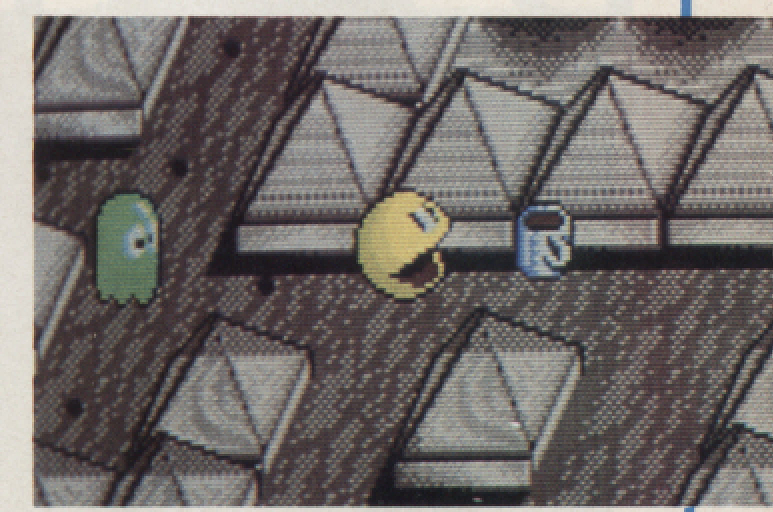


neath the ghosts' cage are more productive than before, with extra lives, power pills and a turbo boost to collect, as well as the point-boosting sweets, coffee, fruit (bananas, strawberries and cherries) and vegetables (peppers, carrots and sweetcorn).

Pacmania was converted by Shaun Hollingworth and Peter Harrap, two erstwhile Gremlin programmers who now form the core of development house Teque – also responsible for Grand Slam's **Terramex** and **The Flintstones**. Ben Daglish is the man behind the accurate renditions of the coin-op tunes.



Once Pacman gets his laughing gear around the yellow power pill, it's all over for Jumpy.



Hotly pursued by Jumpy the ghost, Pacman espies a cup of coffee worth a cool 10,000 bonus points!

ST

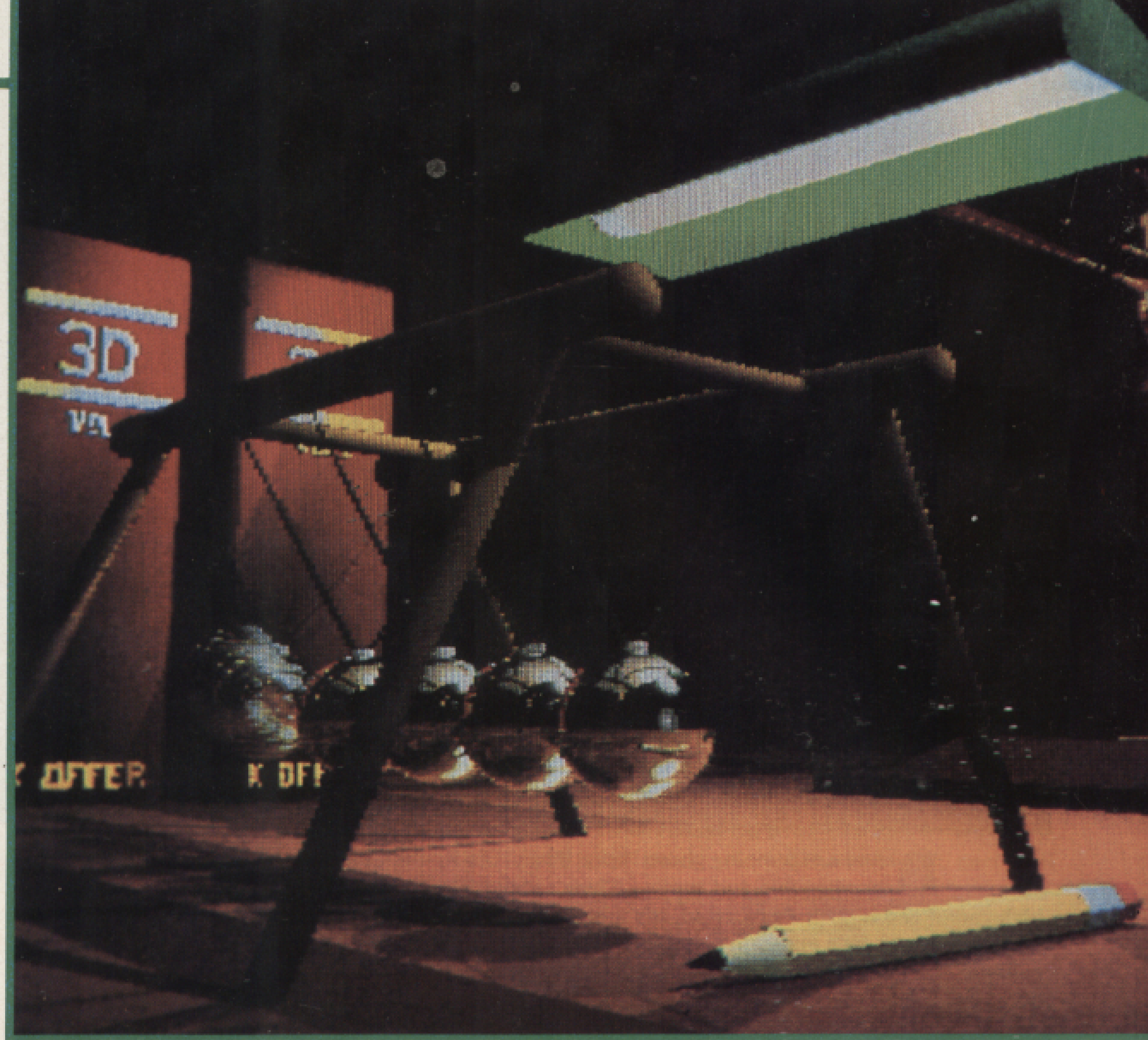
Grand Slam's conversion isn't quite as colourful as its coin-op counterpart, sure, but the definitions and characters of Pacman and the ghosts have been successfully captured, and Teque have accurately reproduced all the playability and addictive qualities. Once you sit down and re-live the good old days with the added luxury of glorious 3D, attractive, smoth scrolling scenery, and foot-tapping soundtracks to jolly you along, the repetitive nature of the gameplay is soon forgotten – if, indeed, it was ever noticed. As with the original Pacman, the action can get extremely frenetic at times, and the tension reaches heart-stopping proportions when it gets to the stage where you can't find an elusive last dot because you didn't notice you'd missed it in the first place. Pacmania will certainly keep fans of the coin-op happy for many months to come, and its oh-so-cute appeal may even extend to mothers across the country. Who knows – you could find your ST taken over by your gran when she next comes round to stay.

PRICE:	£19.95
RELEASE DATE:	Mid-october
GRAPHICS	73%
SOUND	72%
PLAYABILITY	85%
VALUE	78%
OVERALL	**84%**



Due for release at roughly the same time as the ST version, this incarnation promises to be virtually identical to the coin-op. Not only should it play almost identically, it should look very similar too, with 8-colour scenery, 16-colour sprites, and full screen scrolling.

DEMOS



Demos can be bland, unimaginative affairs, with little more than a picture, some sampled sound and a scrolling message in which the author says hello to Uncle Tom Cobbly And All. Or, more importantly, they can be genuinely impressive works of art, featuring eye-catching effects or innovative ideas. But whatever the opinion of the end result, demos are a means of expression, arguably as valuable as sculptures or paintings. Each month we're as keen to display them as you are to see them in print. But we need to be on the ball – so why not give us a hand and send us anything you feel is worthy of everyone else's attention. Be it a picture, a fully animated masterpiece or a simplistic game, pop it in the post in sturdy packaging to: DEMOS, The One, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, LONDON ECIR 3AU. More demos next month, including a look at what 16-bit Compunet has to offer.

To get the ball rolling, we've taken a look at some of the disks that Wakefield-based Public Domain library 17 Bit Software have to offer. 17 Bit Software regard themselves as a very informal club with a very substantial membership of both ST and Amiga owners. Membership is £3.00, and they supply quality Public Domain software for both machines for £2.50, with a standard three day turnaround (or 24 hours if orders are made over the phone). If you want further details, or feel you have a demo good enough for inclusion on one of their disks, drop them a line at 17 Bit Software, PO Box 97, Wakefield WF1 1XX, or call 0924 366892. Oh yes... The disk numbers mentioned are for reference, so should you decide to join 17 Bit and fancy one of the demos mentioned, you've got the information you need.

DISK 99

ST Entitled 'Art Of Noise', this diskette is porked out with a completely sampled rendition of Counterpoint, with samples by Spaz and a bit of progging by Manikin. Just the stuff for anyone turned on by sampled records. Also available are the Pet Shop Boys' Always On My Mind (uh-huh) and Jarres' Zoolook... but only for 1Mb systems. Aaah.

DISK 109

A To be fair, Ian 'n' Mic's Mega Demo doesn't feature anything outstanding, but it's competently put together with some pretty effects and lots of samples, including snatches of S'Express, Voyage Voyage and even James Brown (hah!). Highlight of the disk has to be an amusing animation where the gentleman on the door of a toilet comes to life and shakes his funky thang in time to some sample music. Titter.



DISK 104

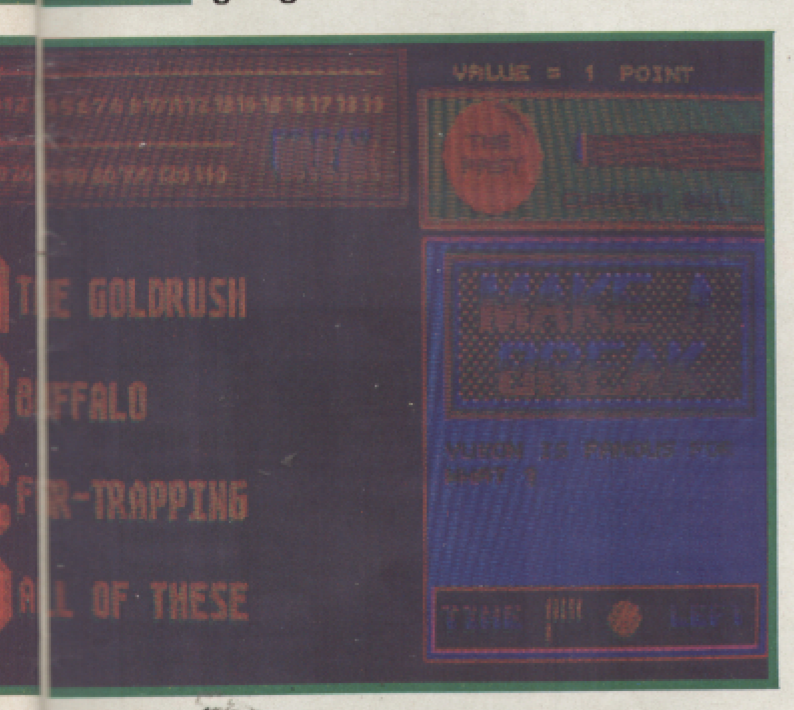
ST Make A Break **takes up the whole of this disk, but that's because it's a playable game rather than a non-interactive demo. It's based on the popular snooker-orientated trivia pub game, Give Us A Break, which in turn was based on Dave Lee Travis' radio show quiz of the same name. The objective is simply to make as large a break as possible by potting balls, as in a game of snooker. However, to pot a ball you have to correctly answer a trivia question, such as Pop Music, General Knowledge, Sport and TV & Films, from a choice of four answers. Pot a red and you can go for a colour – the higher the value, the tougher the question. And the questions get pretty damn trivial. Get the answers right and the ball is potted with a sampled 'clunk' as it sinks. Nothing mind-blowing, but good for a laugh – especially with a few beer-sodden mates. Just like the real thing, in fact...**

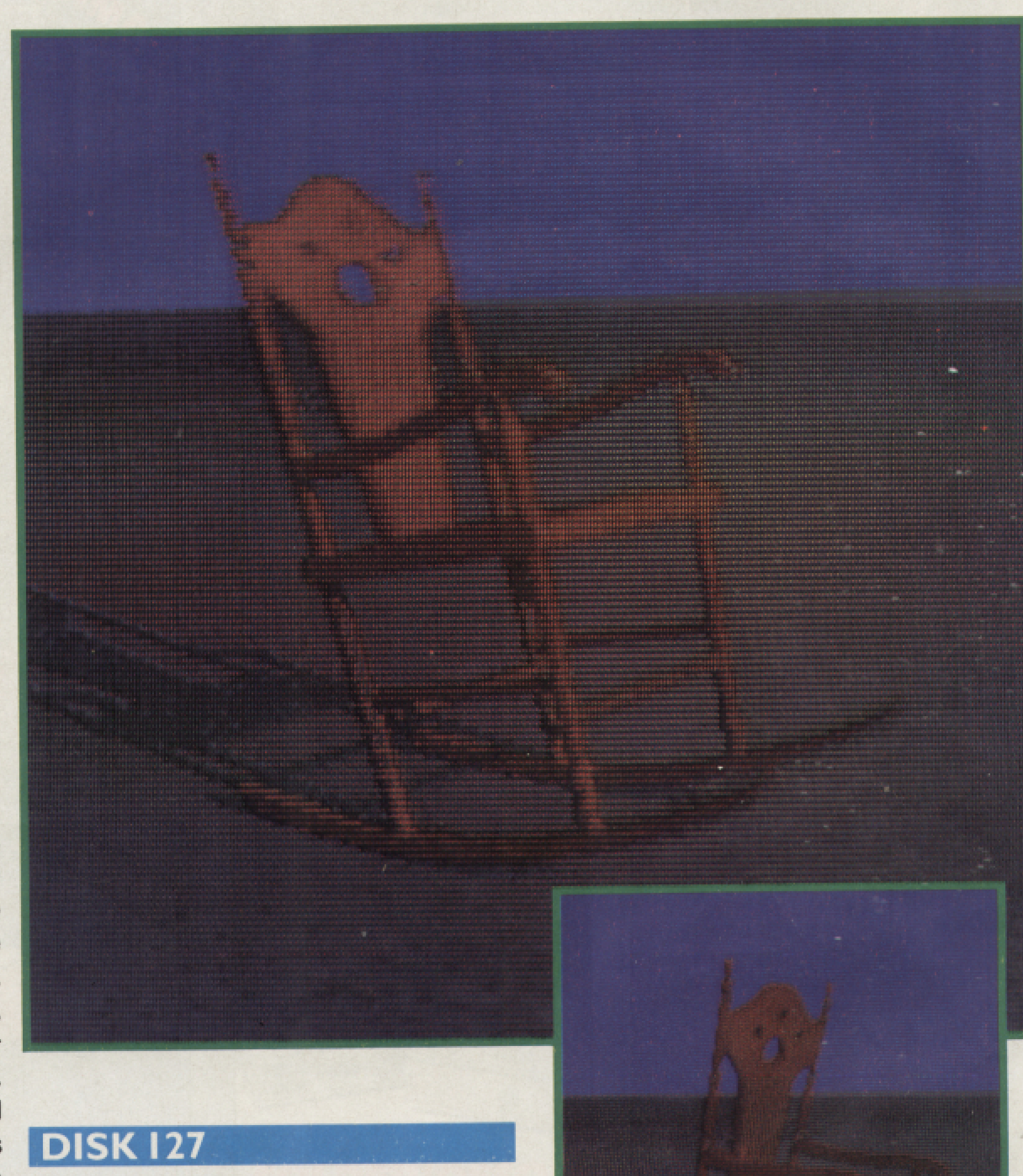
DISK 16

A **Here we have three straightforward graphics demos which aren't that new but are certainly worth a look. The best of the bunch is definitely the** Newton's Cradle, **an impressive ray-trace animation which is guaranteed to turn a few heads when the relatives come to stay. Equally interesting, but not quite so 'Coo-Gosh-Wow', is the rocking chair – another ray-traced work featuring a rocking chair in action. Gasp. Lastly, the least interesting of the three is a line drawn fighter which nips in and out and around the screen.**

DISK 46

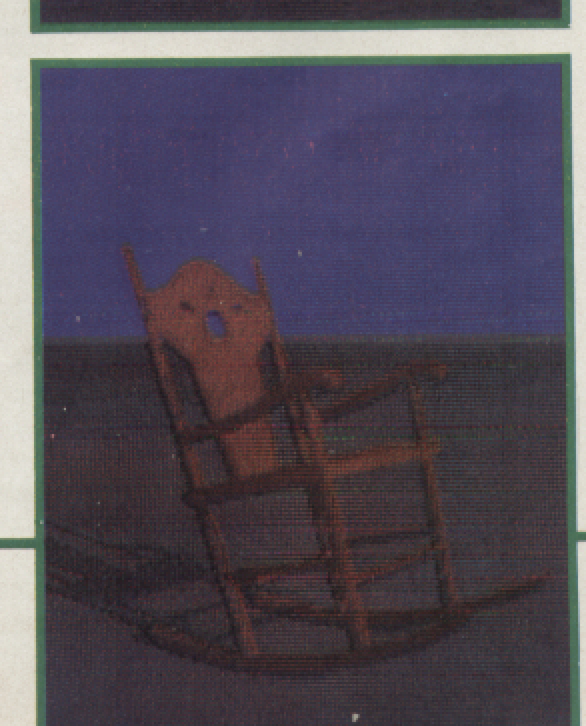
ST **The BIG Demo doesn't feature any fancy swirling images or ray-traced animation. Nope, it's just music – and lots of it. Dozens of classic (and not so classic) Commodore 64 tunes (originally by Rob Hubbard) have been rewritten on the ST, including** Sanxion, Crazy Comets, Monty On The Run, Thrust, Commando, Zoids, Phantoms Of The Asteroids, Star Paws **and a whole lot more besides. Six of the tunes have been remixed slightly with some sampled sounds thrown in for good measure, but on the whole most of the tunes have been accurately reproduced, and there's plenty there to keep you going.**



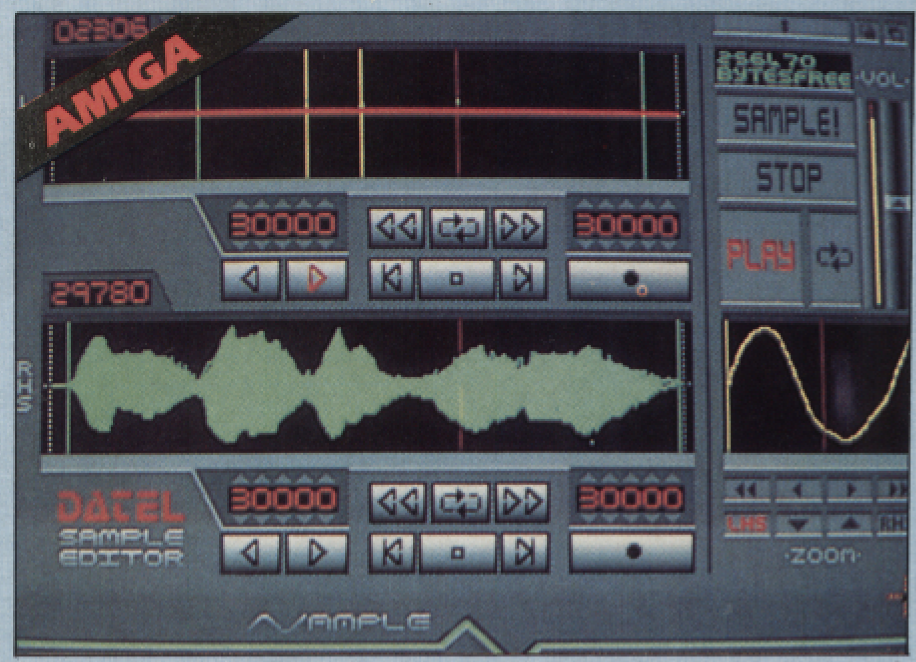


DISK 127

A **Five mildly entertaining demos fill out this disk. Some pretty swirly effects and a lengthy scrolling message are found in** Sinners II, **and there's a simplistic interpretation of Gremlin's** Cosmic Causeway **(the as-yet-unreleased-on-16-bit sequel to** Trailblazer**) in which you guide a bouncing tennis ball through a cavernous chequered road network. The high-point of this disk is the** Hulkamania **demo, which is essentially little more than just another run-of-the-mill demo with a scrolling message, some swirly text and animated graphics, and a piece of reasonable music headed by an excellent piece of sampled speech proclaiming 'HULKAMANIA WILL NEVER DIE' in a gruff, butch voice. Guaranteed to break the ice at parties.**



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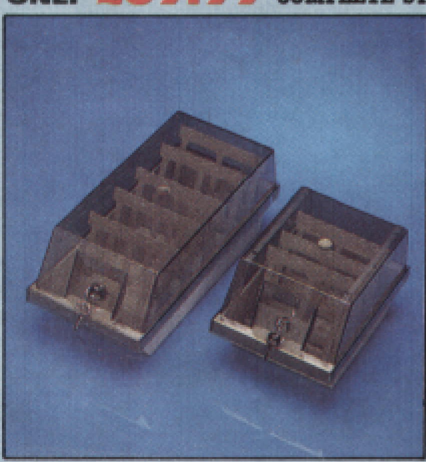
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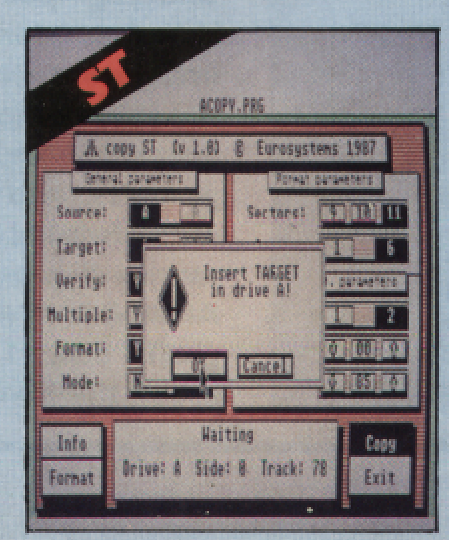
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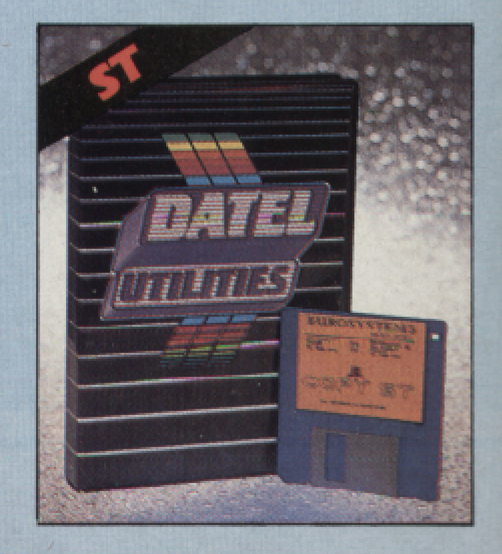
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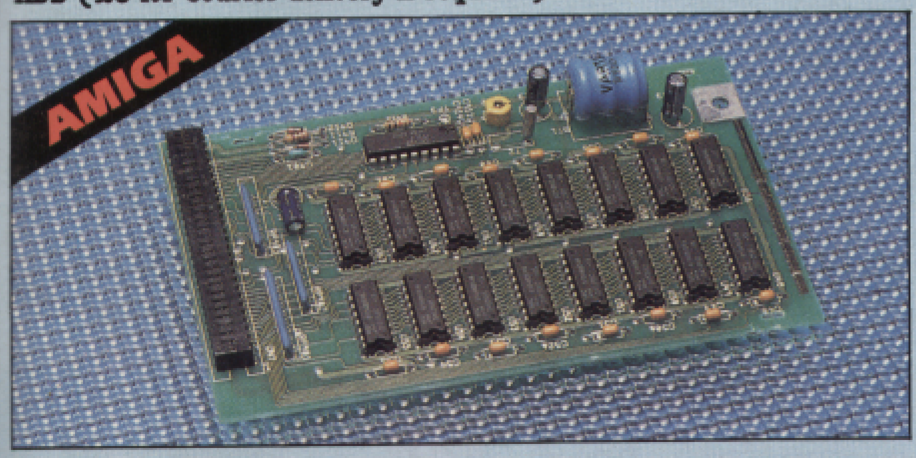
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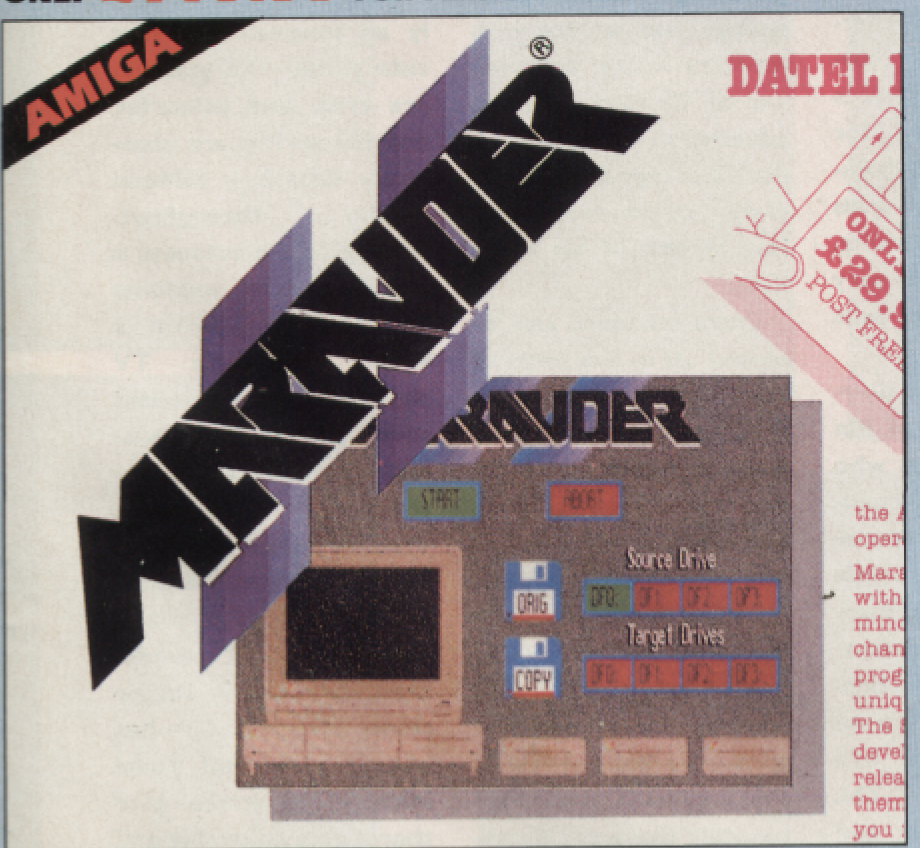




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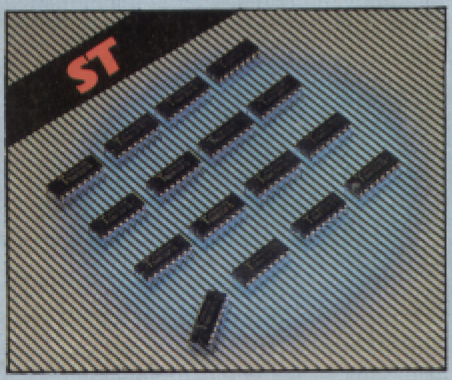
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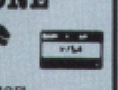
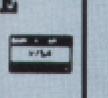
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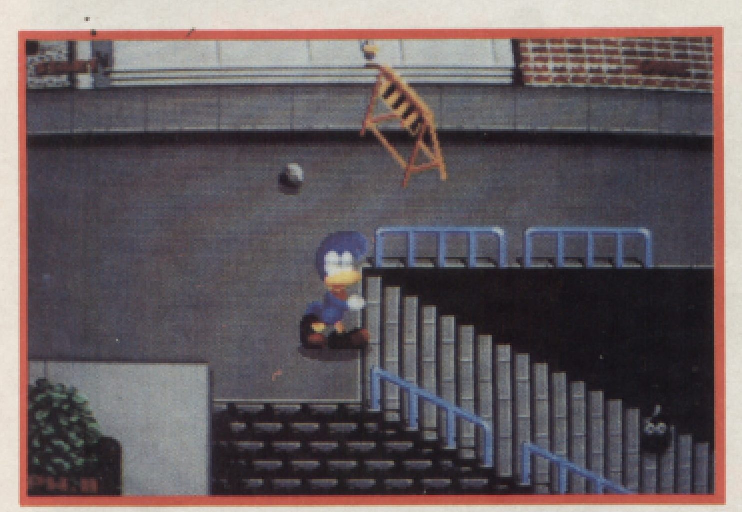
Nothing startlingly original in the arcades this month. Jaleco provides us with yet another Ghosts 'n' Goblins clone, while Konami have two new variants – one based on two of their own classics! Sega's latest is a rehash of the Double Dragon them, but at least it has a bizarre new approach... as Julian Rignall found out.



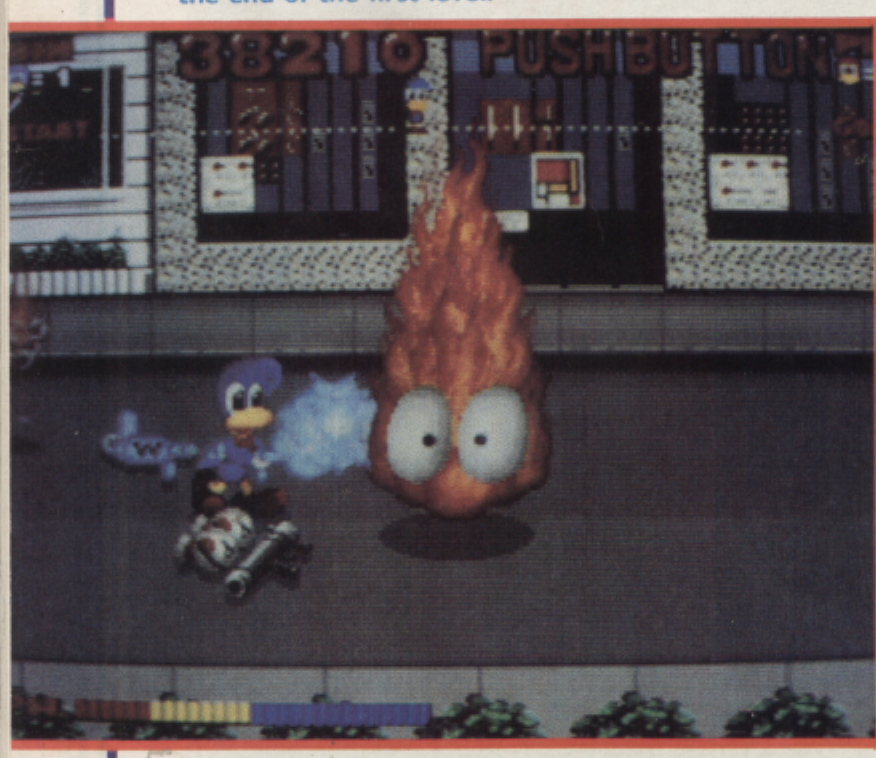
The streets aren't safe when the deadly bouncing mooseheads (!) are out in force... Dozens of weird 'n' wacky adversaries beset the Dynamite Dux on their rescue mission – and this is a prime example.



DYNAMITE DUX (Sega)



Woody Woodpecker look-a-like Pin gets wet with the large, silly-looking ball of flame at the end of the first level.



After Outrun, Alien Syndrome, Afterburner and Thunderblade, Dynamite Dux is quite a departure for Sega. Instead of high-speed thrills and spills and horrific sci-fi blasting, they've opted for a very cute and appealing beat 'em up.

Either one or two players take the role of Pin and Kin, two ducks who bear a striking resemblance to Woody Woodpecker, and battle through a surreal horizontally scrolling landscape to rescue their mistress, who's been abducted by the evil wizard Ackana. The ducks can jump and punch; the longer the fire button is depressed, the harder the punch (signified by the duck's arm spinning faster and faster as he winds up for the blow).

Throughout the rescue bid, strange and wonderful creatures attack, including large red alligators with boxing gloves, giant dog heads, things on springs and wolves with mortars – it's certainly weird! Contact with an adversary reduces a duck's energy bar, the depletion of which signals a loss of one of his three lives.

Extra weapons can be picked up in the form of guns and bombs, which are very useful to clear large numbers of attackers. There are also hamburgers and cakes to collect for extra energy, and treasure chests to open for bonus points.

At the end of the first level a giant fire monster spits little gobs of fire at the hapless heroes. Fortunately there are a couple of water-pistols nearby which are picked up and used to put the fire out – every accurate blast of water makes him burn lower.

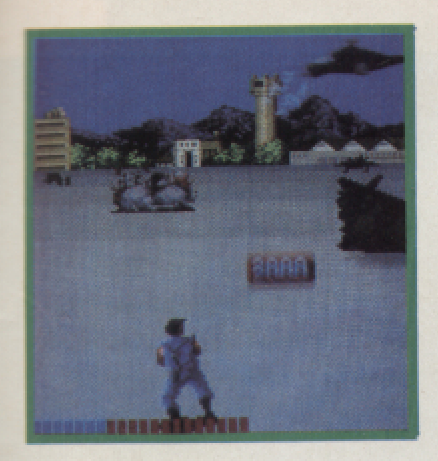
When the fire is out, the ducks continue on their quest for entering the subway, where more vicious creatures in the form of marauding gangs of mice and suited monsters make the going even tougher.

Dynamite Dux is certainly an unusual and very cute game. The graphics are crisp and colourful, and the sprites are absolutely superb – cartoon quality throughout. Adding to the cuteness is a brilliant tune, sounding like something from a wacky children's TV show, and some excellent sound effects: the visual and aural impact is nothing short of stunning. The gameplay is great, especially with two players battling as a team, and although it's fundamentally a Double Dragon clone, Dynamite Dux has enough new and novel features to make play thoroughly enjoyable and addictive.

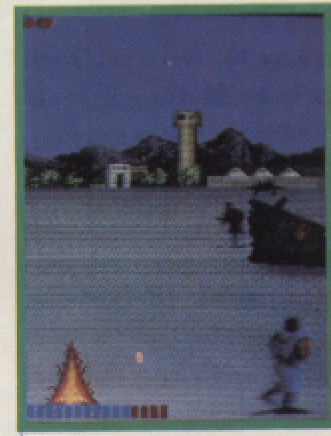
Whoever snaps up the official licence – and surely a game of this quality won't slip through the tightly meshed computer licence net – will have a potential blockbuster on their hands.

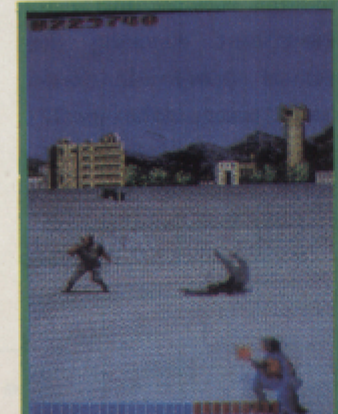
CABAL (Konami)

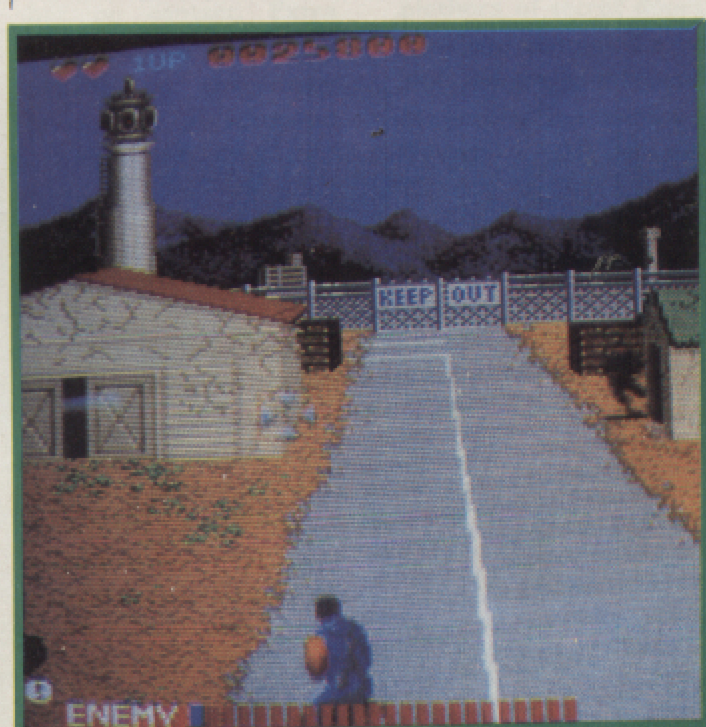
Take out those tanks and armoured vehicles before they take out you... there's more than too much trackball-orientated destructive fun to be had in Konami's tribute to Taito's Operation Wolf.











Sold as a conversion kit for Combat School **machines,** Cabal **is a violent and gory game very much in the** Operation Wolf **mould.**

One or two players take control of soldiers, who sit at the bottom of the screen and kill the enemy. A trackball-guided crosshair is used to line up a shot, and either a grenade or machine gun fire can be turned on enemy soldiers, vehicles and installations.

The trackball also controls the soldier, who is moved left and right to avoid enemy gunfire and grenades; flicking the ball quickly makes him somersault out of the way of an oncoming projectile.

When enough targets have been destroyed, the soldiers do a victory jig and dance their way up the screen to the next level.

Extra weapons in the form of super-machine guns and bazookas are gained by blasting buildings and give the soldiers even greater firepower, making the game even more fun to play!

Later on things get very hectic, with squadrons of soldiers running between densely-packed obstacles, and tanks, helicopters and flamethrowers add to the freneticism.

Cabal **is very enjoyable indeed: it's immensely playable and totally gratuitous. Digitised screams and explosions add to the wartime ambience, as hordes of soldiers, tanks and armoured cars are totalled.**

If you like Operation Wolf, **grab a load of change and make a beeline for** Cabal!



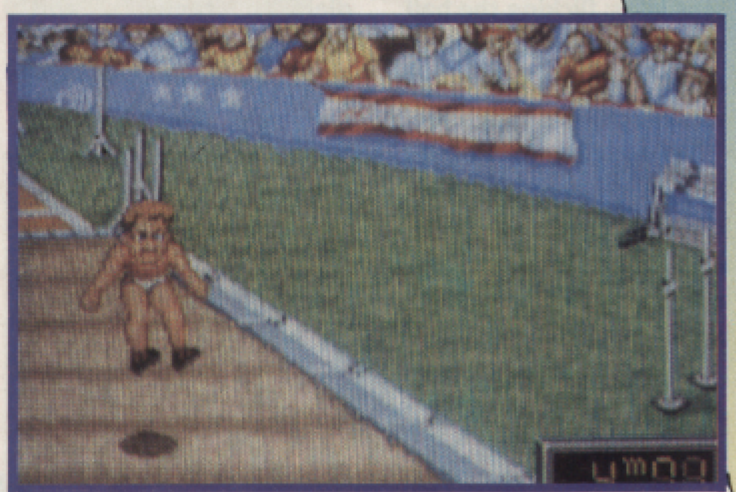


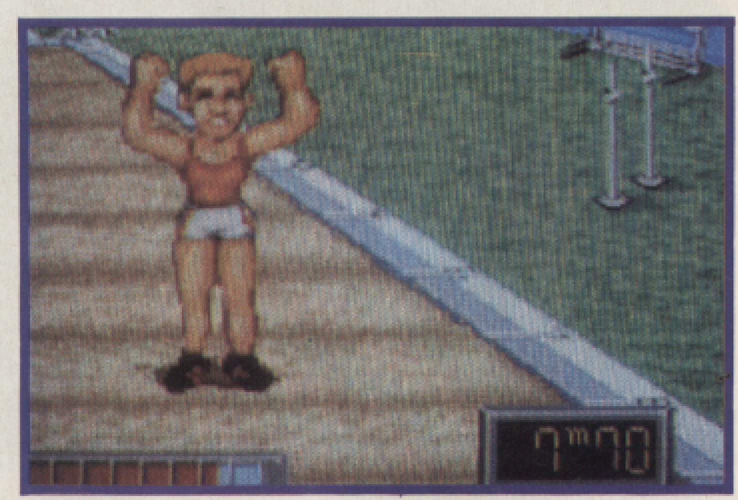




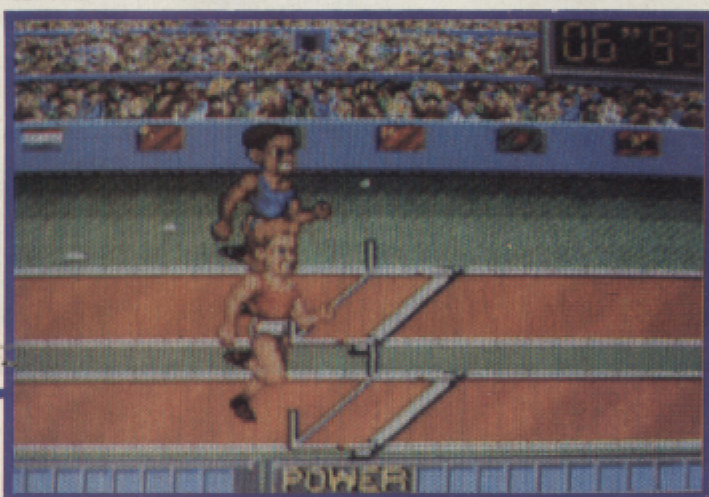
KONAMI '88 (Konami)







The above three shots show the 3D viewpoint used in the actual jumping stage of the long jump. Fortunately you don't have to see it in slow motion here...



Just released in time for the Seoul Olympics is Konami's new button-bashing sports simulation. It's basically a rehash of two of their previous games, Track & Field and Hypersports, and also boasts one new event.

The action begins with a simple 100m dash, giving the player a chance to warm up. Next comes the long jump, where more button pounding is required to launch the player's athlete into the longest possible jump. Two views are incorporated here, with a side-on view of the jumper used for the run-up, and a 3D viewpoint showing the actual jump. It looks quite neat, although it's played in slow motion – very annoying if you've just made a foul jump.

A new event is next on the agenda: the 4x100m relay. Yet more button bashing, with fire used to pass the baton between runners. This is the most energy-sapping of all the events, and requires frenetic pounding for up to 40 seconds!

Skeet shooting follows, with the player given the chance to test his hand-to-eye co-ordination rather than his strength. The power buttons are used to guide a crosshair left and right, and fire blasts a skeet out of the sky – if it's pressed when the crosshair is on target. If all skeets are hit, a duck flies across, giving the player a chance to increase his score dramatically by blasting it repeatedly for bonus points.

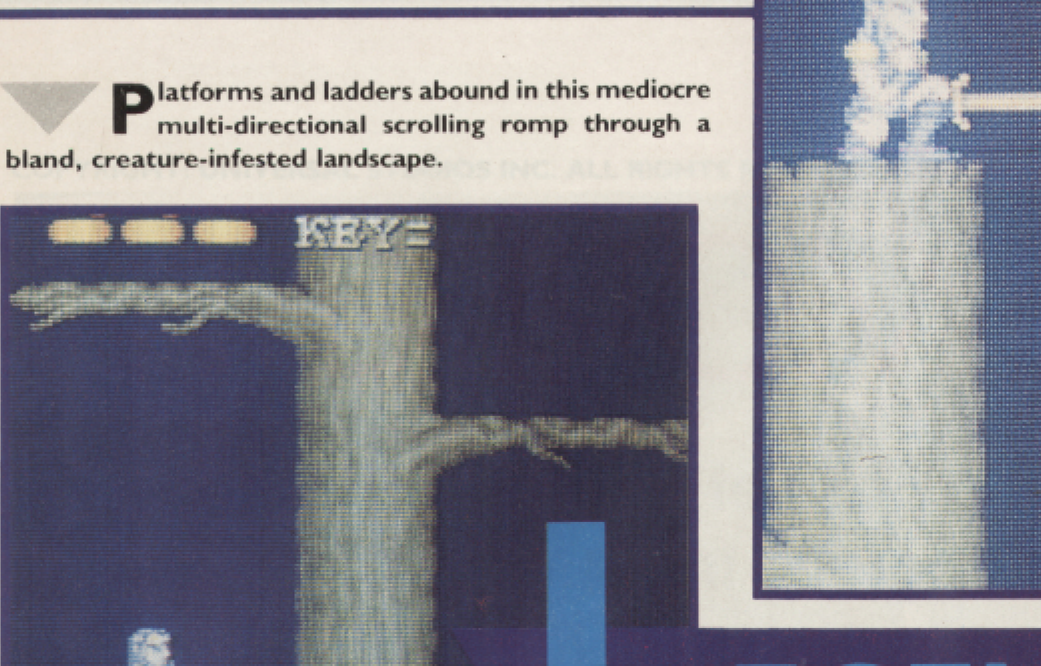
Back to the bashing with 110m hurdles, before retiring to the relative quiet of archery. Similar in style to archery on Hyper Sports, but instead viewed in 3D, the player uses the fire button to adjust the angle of his arrow as it flies towards a moving target. It's a tricky event to master, but perseverance reaps rewards. The penultimate event is the javelin – played in similar fashion to the long jump – and finally it's the high jump, the most difficult of them all: power AND skill with the fire button is needed to get the athlete over the bar.

Button bashing games seem to be back in fashion at the moment, and Konami '88 is definitely the best of the bunch. Some neat graphics and cute effects lift it up from the rest, but like many games of this type, you won't be playing it for very long.

Oh no, it's the ghost of sports simulations past come to haunt us... Yet another incarnation of a very old theme – skeet shooting.

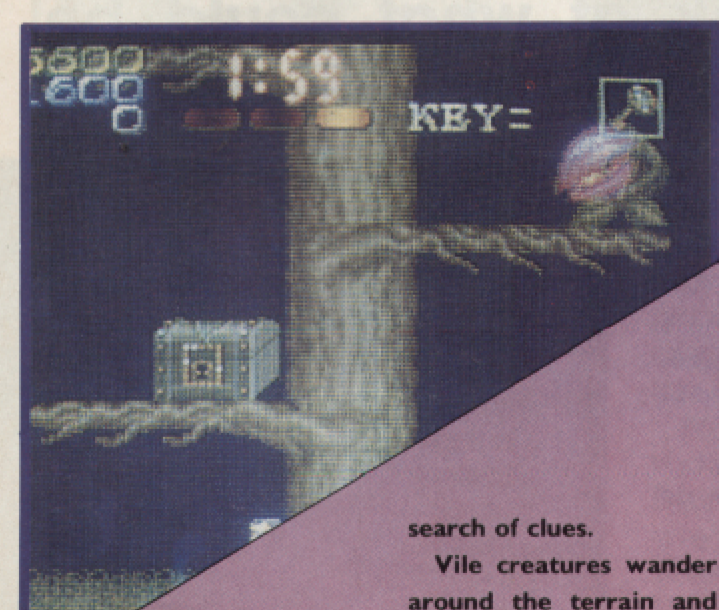


Platforms and ladders abound in this mediocre multi-directional scrolling romp through a bland, creature-infested landscape.





LEGEND OF MAKAJ (Jaleco)





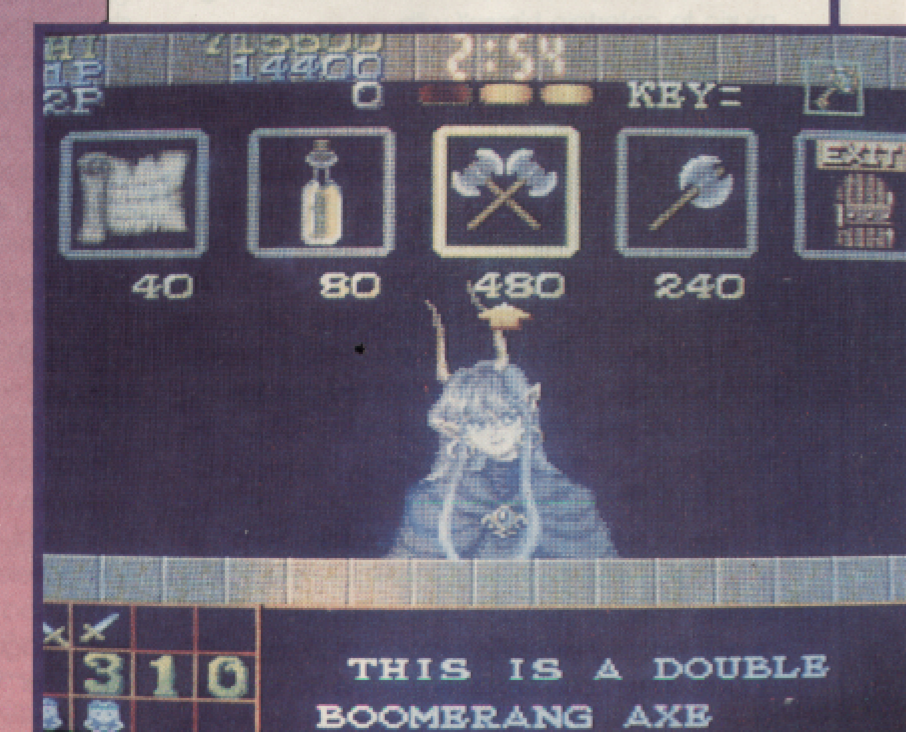
New ideas seem to be lacking in the arcades at the moment, and Legend Of Makaj does little to rectify the situation. It's a cross between Ghosts 'n' Goblins and Legend Of Kage, and features the player as a hero on the quest to rescue his spouse, a beautiful princess who's been turned into an ugly pixie by an evil wizard. To free her from the spell, the hero must destroy the wizard, a task which requires him to explore a horizontally scrolling (and occasionally vertically scrolling) platform and ladders landscape in search of clues.

Vile creatures wander around the terrain and attack the sword-wielding hero on sight, reducing his three-stage energy bar on contact. Extra weapons are gained by picking up the many jewels that are scattered around and buying items from one of the many shops that are dotted about the landscape. Jewels can also be exchanged for 'secret' information, extra strength, shields and healing potions.

Occasionally an unmarked door is found, which is entered to reveal a part of the magic spell to destroy the wizard, or extra rooms where useful items such as keys and valuable treasure may be found.

The landscape is split into several different levels; at the end of each is a tough guardian who is despatched before the player goes onto the next level. As progress is made, the landscape becomes more and more like a maze, with a plethora of secret doors, false and concealed exits and seemingly inaccessible parts of the landscape to confuse and confound the player – a map or a good memory is essential if the quest is to be completed.

Featuring some rather bland graphics and an absolutely dire soundtrack. Legend Of Makaj treads the well-worn Ghost 'n' Goblins path and offers few thrills and spills. Some of the puzzles are well executed, but really there's little to keep you pumping in the coins.



Extra weapons are yours for the purchasing when you enter one of the many shops found in Jaleco's Legend Of Makaj – a hackneyed rehash of the Capcom's ageing Ghost 'n' Goblins formula. Coo, that double boomerange axe sounds like a bit of a laugh... it's a shame Julian can't afford it.

TOMORROW'S

Let's not get tied up with the technological ins and outs of how a laser beam is bounced off a reflective surface to read data from a compact disc. Let's skip over the pits and bytes, get out of the silvery groove and look at what could be happening on a screen near you in the near future...

In the beginning there was the laser disc and people were sore confused, for there was a variety of standards in the marketplace. Then the great gods of technology, Sony and Philips did look down on the situation and did agree that all this confusion was not good for business. And on the third day, they did create the compact disc, and along with the compact disc they did create a standard so that whosoever did manufacture a compact disc, or whosoever did make a compact disc player could be sure of compatibility. And the consumer was impressed, and did rush out and buy many compact disc players and many compact discs containing music to entertain himself with...

Soon there was talk of the CD ROM, and computer people did chatter to one another about a new storage medium. A storage medium that allowed many megabytes of information to be stashed in one small place for very little money. And then they did talk about Compact Disc Interactive, a way of storing sound and images along with data on a silvery platter. They saw they could retrieve information in the form of sound and pictures in a way that was interactive; a way that allowed the user to have much fun...

CD ROM is a slightly misleading term – ROM, standing for Read Only Memory, implies memory that the computer reads almost instantaneously, memory with a very fast access time – comparable to RAM. But as Jim Mackonochie of Pergamon Compact Solution, one of the leading companies working on CD ROM publishing project puts it: "CD ROM is effectively a large Winchester that you can't write to." Data on a CD ROM disk has to be read into memory before the CPU can get hold of it.

Nevertheless, CD ROM offers the means to store, organise and access vast quantities of information economically – and as the price of CD ROM drives falls towards the £200 mark, 'ordinary' users will be able to afford to take advantage of the technology. At the moment, CD ROM publishing is confined to the corporate market, and about 250 CD ROM products have been announced: "announced means you can order it," Jim Mackonochie qualifies. "About 80% of the titles are shipped and 20% are not ready yet."

With CD ROM, you can not only pack a vast amount of data onto a single, virtually undamageable disc, you can use software to organise and present it so that the user has unparalleled ease of access. Text may be combined with bitmapped graphics or digitised images, and indexed and searched with a power and ease that makes printed or microfilmed material seem a masochist's dream.

Anywhere there's a large database, CD ROM could step in and make accessing information a joy. Reference works, parts catalogues, directories, library catalogues, geographical and demographical information, and even subsets of on-line databases all lend themselves to the CD ROM treatment. At the moment, though CD ROM activity is confined to vertical markets – scientific, technical and medical markets where institutions or corporations have a need to index and access their specialised information more rapidly. The cost of organising data for publishing on CD, in combination with the cost and the relatively low penetration of the drives means that CD ROM in the home is some way into the future.

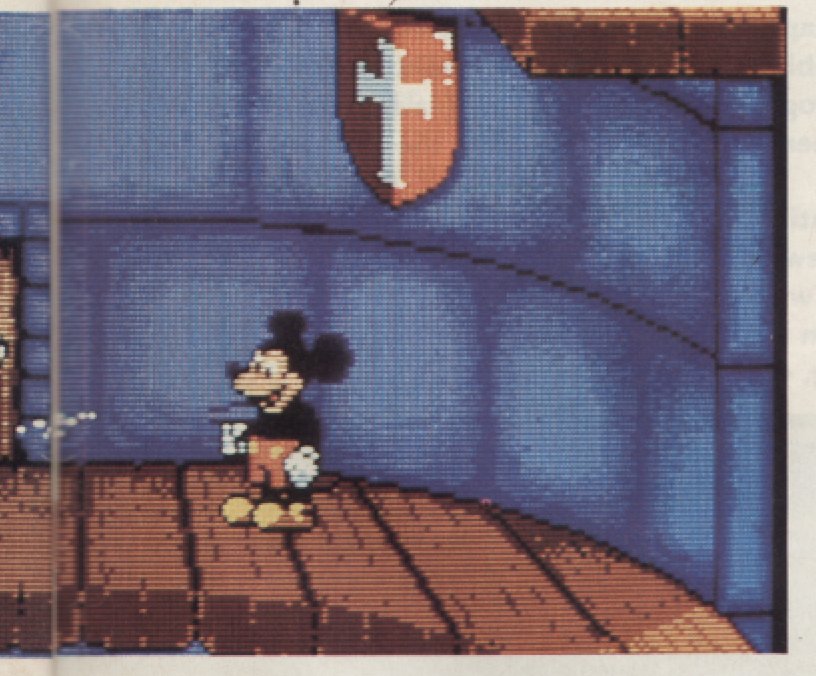


Gremlin's Mickey Mouse on the ST. A competent attempt at producing a form of interactive cartoon on a home micro. Take the same concept and apply CD-based technology, and you really could be playing the cartoon!

Pergamon Compact Solution's flagship project at the moment is being undertaken for Boeing. Large passenger jets are horrendously expensive items, and need to be kept flying for

WORD... INTERACTIVE





as much of the time as possible. But they are also horrendously complicated pieces of equipment, and have to be maintained thoroughly, to very high safety standards. Put the parts list next to the maintenance manual for the Boeing 757, and you have over 18,000 pages of documentation. Wading through a manual and searching through a microfilmed parts catalogue while taking into account procedural updates and following all the cross-references is a daunting and time-consuming task for even the most experienced engineer.

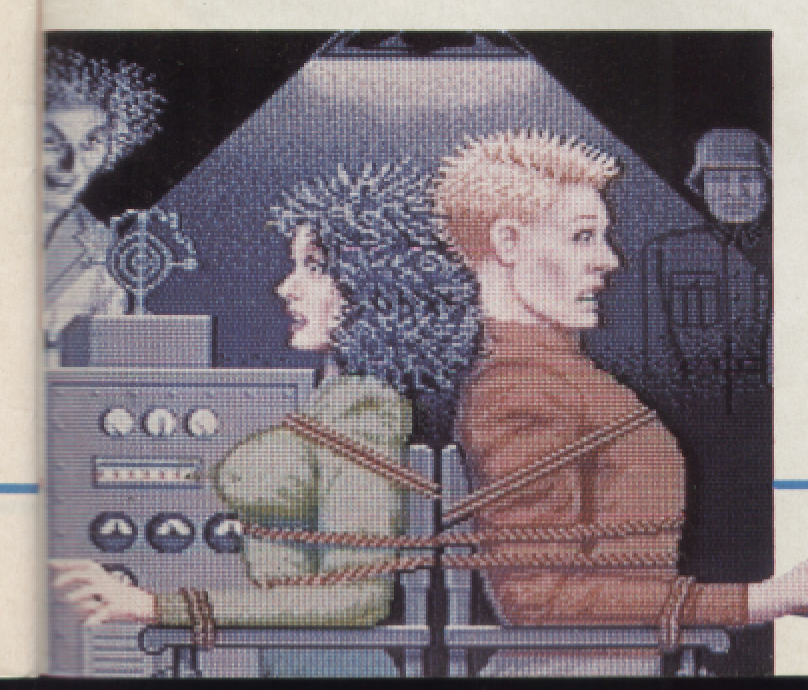
Put all the information on CD ROM, and tracking down the potential cause of a fault becomes a breeze: setting up and conducting a search for all occurrences of 'oil', 'leak' and 'engine' is trivial, and when you're scanning the relevant areas of text once they've been found and called onto the screen, just point and click on reference to a part or sub-assembly and the diagram and details from the parts catalogue pop into a window on the screen. Found the information you need to effect the repair? Prod a key, and the diagrams and text you might want to refer to on the tarmac are output to a laser printer.

And one day, when CD ROM drives are fitted as standard to PCs, you'll be able to zip through the Encyclopaedia Britannica on CD ROM in the comfort of your own home. You could also use CD ROM to provide a massive world of detailed terrain to accompany a flight simulator, perhaps, but it would hardly advance the frontiers of entertainment software. And with a mixed-mode CD ROM drive, such as the one recently launched by Hitachi, you can combine CD quality audio and data on the same disc – take a database of classical records, point to an entry on the screen and you can have the packshot displayed on screen in all its glory with a two minute audio extract of the music. All fascinating stuff, very useful and 'worthy', but hardly nerve-tingling fun...

Can't we have words, video and audio all together, presented so that we can point and click and interact with what we see and hear? Why, certainly sir, if it's interactive entertainment you want, the possibilities are enormous – if you can wait a while...

About five years ago the game playing world was treated to the first worthwhile attempt at multi-media computer entertain-

Incredibly, interactive TV was conceived before CDs... The 'Family Wall' seen in the cult '60s SF movie, Farenheit 451. According to Michael Bywater, Punch columnist and the writer behind Jinxter and Bureaucracy, the family wall in Farenheit 451 is technically possible today. "There's about 80% more space occupied in a broadcast TV signal than is really needed," he says, "which means there's room for interactive TV... if people want it, that is." Interactive Eastenders may be a touch too demanding for the couch potatoes that form its current audience...



Cinemaware's Rocket Ranger on the Amiga. "Cinemaware was set up with the intention of designing a new kind of entertainment," says Bob Jacob. "We're using home computers as a training ground, developing and refining the methodology for interactive games in preparation for the arrival of appropriate technology."

ment. Targetted at 8-bit home computers aided and abetted by an audio cassette player, **Deus Ex Machina** was the work of a visionary: Mel Croucher. The technology used limited the level of interactivity to a bit of joystick-waggling in sub-games, but nevertheless this was the first serious attempt at combining an audio soundtrack in synchronisation with the output of a computer screen. Was it art? Maybe. Was it good? It won awards, and met with acclaim. Did it sell? No, mainly because Mr Croucher didn't agree with the trading terms of distributors – the product was shunned by the forces of Mammon. Visionaries don't often get rich.

Recently, things have been hotting up on the interactive entertainment front, and there are now two basic technologies vieing for one another in developers' laboratories: systems based on CDs and systems based on VCRs.

On the CD front there's Compact Disc Interactive (CDI), a detailed standard developed by Philips and Sony as an extension of the original digital audio CD technology; Digital Video Interactive, essentially a proprietary set of chips developed by RCA that allows video data to be compressed, stored on CD then decompressed in real time; and Interactive Contact Video Disc, that combines analog video with digital sound on a compact disc.

And for VCRs there are several systems, based on black boxes. Mel Croucher developed such a device two years ago that allowed your 8-bit computer to be interfaced with a video, and jolly dancing Phil Collinses were previewed at the PCW Show a few years ago. This system may yet surface, but the Ideal Toy Company will definitely be launching an interactive videotape system in America this Christmas, and another toy corporation, Hasbro, is set to follow the lead.

But what are we likely to be playing in the way of interactive games, when will we be playing them and who is going to provide the software? Bob Jacob of Cinemaware set up his company "with the intention of designing a new kind of entertainment", and is using Cinemaware as a training ground where the methodology for interactive games can be developed and refined, ready for the arrival of appropriate technology. Around 25 people at Cinemaware work on their computer games, and a team of five – the Cinemaware Interactive Entertainment Group – is working on games designed for the up and coming systems. The alliance between the American company Cinemaware and Mirrorsoft in England is not entirely coincidental – both Mirrorsoft and Pergamon Compact Solution are part of the Maxwell group of companies, and they share offices in the same building...

Bob Jacob has a lot to say about the interactive technologies that should be gracing our homes in the 1990s.

"The severest limitation of CDI is that it will not do full screen, full motion video. It has built-in video and interactive capabilities, but it is limited to a fairly small full motion video window – about 25% of the screen can be used for video. Nevertheless, it could make the ultimate arcade machine – you could design around CDI and produce some fabulous computer games." CDI, unfortunately, was announced rather prematurely – Philips told everyone about it in the middle of a CD ROM conference in 1986, and promised that the hardware would be out in the mass market during 1987. Although the standard has been carefully developed, there's not much in the way of CDI software ready yet, and after a host of delays the latest target date for the launch of CDI is mid-1989. "I'm no longer as high about CDI as I once was," Bob Jacob admits. "You can design around it, but it's not really enough."

ICVD then? "Technically, it's the least capable of the three CD-based technologies, but it will do full screen, full motion video." An ordinary CD can store about five minutes of full video, but with ICVD ten or maybe twelve minutes of analog video can be crammed onto a single disc, accompanied by digital sound. "You

The technology behind DVI is impressive, centering on two custom chips that form part of a board for the PC AT or compatibles. The Pixel Processor runs microcode at 12.5 million operations per second, and achieves dramatic compression of images – a single frame of video is compressed from 600K to 5K, and the audio accompaniment is reduced to 500 bytes per frame. The other custom chip, the Output Display Processor, decompresses the video and audio data in real time, as the programme is viewed.

The capabilities are amazing, and the applications many and varied. Existing or specially-shot video footage can be combined with computer-generated graphics and digitally-recorded audio in a DVI programme. And the user (rather than the 'viewer') can interact with what is seen on screen, affecting the course the programme takes.

Training, sales demonstration, education, design and entertainment are all potential DVI applications – and a good few pilots have already been made by third party developers working in conjunction with RCA on the prototype system. Next month, we'll bring you a full run-down on what has already been achieved on DVI and CDI systems, but for the time being, drool over these shots . . .





Video interaction at its most simplistic... Ocean's ABC Sports Winter Olympics, featuring live action segments linked to a board game. Mastertronic and Waddington's tried something similar last year...

could do **Dragon's Lair** type of games on ICVD, but you don't have true interactivity", Jacob concludes.

RCA's Digital Video Interactive is the system that they have their eyes on at Cinemaware: "It's a fantastic technology, there's nothing that comes close to competing with it," Mr Jacob enthuses. DVI is the product of over five years' research at RCA, and is essentially a proprietary set of chips that allow up to 72 minutes of full screen, full motion video to be crammed onto a single compact disc. The video data is compressed by a ratio of 120:1 before it is stored on disc and then decompressed in real time by the special DVI chips. The only problem is that the chips are painfully expensive – it would cost around £4,000 to produce a home DVI player at the moment, and until costs come down, DVI is only going to be found in government departments or mega corporations.

VCR-based interactive systems are going to be the first into the home. Already, a large number of 'interactive' video games have been released – including Ocean's skiing game, which appeared in the shops last Christmas – but they have generally been related to board games, and as such haven't been very interactive. Several systems are being developed by American toy companies, based on a multi-track approach, which allows the player to bounce from track to track on the same video tape. Admittedly, video tape is serial – you start at the beginning and carry on until the end without jumping backwards and forwards over the data – but you get high-quality, full motion video and an awful lot of homes already have a video in the front room. "It's rather compelling... the potential is absolutely marvellous," Jacob says, revealing that Cinemaware have already completed one such project for the Ideal Toy Company. This Christmas, an interactive video that uses the Disney library of cartoon characters will be on sale in American toyshops – and Cinemaware put the game together.



The Cinemaware approach is to develop the techniques of designing interactive games while they wait for the technology to arrive. As Bob Jacob says, "Someday, somewhere, people are going to invent a very compelling interactive technology, a mass market entertainment medium that will bring parents and children into a mass market application. I don't know which hardware system is going to win, but once we've developed an interactive design methodology we can shoot material and use it across all formats." Whether it's CDI, DVI, ICVD, Interactive VCR or something completely new like interactive cable TV, Cinemaware will be there.

The 1990's are just around the corner, and a whole new entertainment medium that will allow the player to interact with specially shot video footage is waiting in the wings.

Suggested Reading...
CDI Developer's Handbook
CDI: A Designer's Overview
Kluwer Technical Books
ISBN 9021021103
And...
CD ROM the New Papyrus
Microsoft Press
ISBN 0-914845-74-8
Available through Penguin Books

Anyone who has struggled to fix their motor, guided by a Haynes manual full of exploded diagrams and black and white pictures of a mechanic working on a similar vehicle, will understand the difficulties involved in learning how to do a job while you're actually doing it. The only real reference you have are the parts in the car you are attempting to fix. With DVI, computer generated pictures and diagrams can be mixed with full-colour full-motion video of the mechanic disassembling parts in front of the camera.

The DVI way to learn how to fix cars is painless and much more useful than the written word and printed picture. Click on the relevant icon to call a section of the programme onto screen, watch the graphic representation of the parts you are about to attack, rotating them as you wish. Then listen to the audio soundtrack that takes you through the task as a video window comes onto screen, revealing specially-shot footage of a skilled mechanic undertaking the manoeuvres you are about to attempt.

One day, there will probably be racks of Haynes compact discs in Halfords, replacing those classic manuals – you know, the ones that take you through removing and dismantling part of your car and then glibly state "reassembly is the reverse of the above procedure" after you've got the thing in bits all over the front room carpet . . .



And DVI is set to make designers' work easier – in a landscaping demo, for instance, you can combine a real photo of a house and garden with a library of trees, plants and shrubs. Clik on an icon, and you can see how Mary's garden grows immediately after cockle shells and silver bells have been placed in borders. Click again, and you view the garden five years after the landscaping: click again to see how things look when the new garden has reached maturity.

Suddenly, with DVI, the felt-pen rough goes out the window, and the 'artist's impression' can be replaced with real images, edited together to show how things will actually look.

AND IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF



FOR 16-BIT GAMES

- FREE! The definitive buyers guide for ST and Amiga games.
- A look at what Amstrad's new PC-compatible Sinclair machine has to offer.
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